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DON'T CALL NICK ROSS

Valerie Grove hears why he's hanging up after ten years
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TOMORROW

THE WAY AHEAD

Chief Rabbi Sachs on the future of Britain

Victory likely in 18-year campaign

Freedom for Bridgewater prisoners

By FRANCES GIBBS AND RICHARD FORD

THREE of the four men jailed for murdering Carl Bridgewater 18 years ago are expected to be freed today after the emergence of new evidence supporting their innocence.

The men will be brought from prison to the Court of Appeal, where lawyers for the Crown will outline scientific evidence suggesting that the police tricked one of the men into confessing.

The three — the fourth died in 1981 — will apply for bail pending a full hearing of the new evidence after their convictions are expected to be quashed. They can then hope to receive about £190,000 compensation for the years wrongly spent in jail.

Michael Hickey, Vincent Hickey, James Robinson and Patrick Molloy were jailed in November 1979 for the shooting of Carl, a 13-year-old newspaper boy who apparently interrupted a burglary at the isolated Yew Tree Farm near Stourbridge in Staffordshire. The Hickeys and Robinson were sentenced to life for murder with a recommendation that they serve at least 25 years. Molloy, who died in prison, was jailed for 12 years for manslaughter.

Since their conviction there have been numerous attempts to get the convictions overturned and today's sudden development comes five weeks before a second appeal was due to open.

Legal sources said last night that the Crown had been prepared to fight the appeal to the end, but the prosecuting authorities had become aware



Carl Bridgewater was shot dead.

of material "so significant" that the court ought to be made aware of it immediately.

The new evidence came to light after defence solicitors requested that an "Edda" test be carried out on Molloy's confession. This test, which involves electronic image enhancement, revealed the imprint of a fabricated confession by Vincent Hickey, designed to trap Molloy into confessing himself.

Molloy always maintained he had been tricked by police showing him what he thought was Vincent Hickey's own admission, but the police always denied this. The Edda test has proved that his account was true.

Jim Nichol, who represents the men, said last night: "There is powerful fresh evidence of a false confession that was shown to one of the defendants by the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. It was a lying confession shown to him to make him confess. I

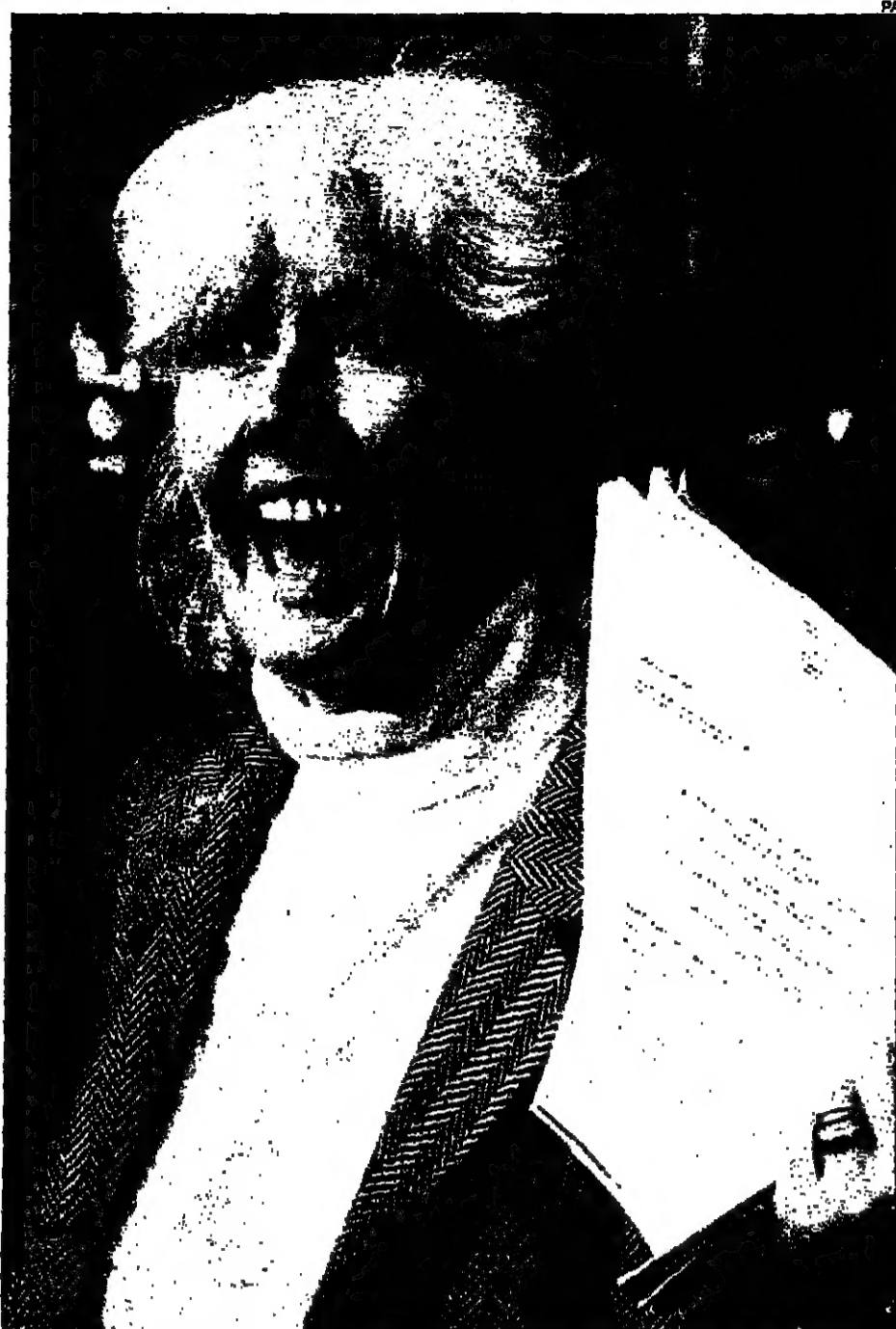
am delighted — but angry that they have spent eighteen and a half years in prison for a crime they did not commit.

"I fully expect my clients to walk out of court free men. It may not finish tomorrow, as it is an emergency hearing called at very short notice. But my three clients will be acquitted or released on bail."

The case of the Bridgewater Four is the longest running of a series of high-profile campaigns to correct miscarriages of justice, including the terrorism cases involving the Guildford Four, the Maguire Seven and the Birmingham Six. The quashing of convictions in those cases dealt a devastating blow to the criminal justice system and led to the creation of a Criminal Cases Review Commission, which will start work in April.

The Bridgewater Four were convicted largely on the confession of Patrick Molloy, which four language experts and a psychiatrist agree could have been fabricated. The men's protests gained credence with the revelation that the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad had fabricated confessions and planted evidence in 23 other cases.

Vincent Hickey's mother last night expressed delight at the new hearing, but said that the case undermined the reputation of the British justice system. Ann Skett said: "We just screamed and yelled and danced. There is no bitterness in my heart. I just know he is going to come out." But she added: "The prosecution service didn't want to admit that



Anne Whelan, Michael Hickey's mother, has campaigned ceaselessly for her son

there had been a mistake. What are people going to think of our police? There was a lot of covering-up."

Sarah McHugh, who has campaigned for the convicted men, was also delighted by the development. She said: "These men are innocent and they have been in prison for 19 years for a crime they did not commit and every day they spend in jail is a day too long. There have been an awful lot

of people fighting for a very long time on this case. Jim Nichol has worked tirelessly and Ann Whelan, Michael Hickey's mother, has been an amazing campaigner and has done a brilliant job. It is thanks to her that we have got this far today."

Mrs Whelan has waged a ceaseless battle to prove her son's innocence, and when the men's first appeal failed in 1981 she told the then Lord

Chief Justice, Lord Lane: "Your judgment, sir, is outrageous." She gathered thousands of documents and evidence and won the interest of the journalist Paul Foot, who wrote a book about the case.

Last night Mr Foot said: "I feel complete jubilation. They did not kill that newspaper boy. Their lives have been completely wrecked by their time in prison."

Three drown as yacht capsizes

Two policemen and a teenager drowned in the Solent after their yacht capsized in waters described by the Coastguard as "a bubbling cauldron".

Another officer who survived clung for six hours to the grounded vessel's hull before the beam from his torch was spotted. Page 3

Health screening may be harmful

Mass health screening programmes may harm healthy people while helping only a few who are sick.

Research has found that being wrongly identified as a potential risk can cause high levels of anxiety which persist even after the person is cleared. Page 6

Major-Blair clash electrifies MPs

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

JOHN MAJOR and Tony Blair traded blows in an electrifying Commons clash yesterday that thrust the constitution into the centre of the general election battle.

During an explosive confrontation both leaders were judged by their own sides, and by many of their opponents, to have given their most effective Commons performances for some time. But there were two serious policy developments.

Mr Blair gave a firm hint that a Labour government might sidestep parliamentary convention to prevent its raft of constitutional bills from clogging up the Commons timetable. In the past constitutional measures have been taken on the floor of the House where all MPs can take part.

Egged on by Donald Dewar, his chief whip, sitting alongside him, Mr Blair said

"Parliament would decide" how the Bills were handled — a clear indication that he would use a Labour majority to push them into committee.

Outside the chamber Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary and party policy chief, put flesh on Labour plans for reforming the Lords. He said that after Labour had abolished the voting rights of hereditary peers it would appoint life peers to ensure that the balance of voting in the Lords broadly reflected the way the country had voted at the general election. The plan to appoint peers is a halfway house move to be taken pending Labour's decision to set up an elected second chamber in its second term of office.

Matthew Parris, page 2
Peter Riddell, page 8

Beijing on edge as Deng 'goes to meet Marx'

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

A MOOD of nervousness gripped Beijing yesterday as Deng Xiaoping went to meet Marx.

The tension was exemplified when four young Chinese attempting to lay flowers at the Martyrs' Memorial on Tiananmen Square were grabbed by police.

Their floral tribute to the paramount leader was thrown into a police van. The authorities fear that any expressions of grief might be exploited for political ends, as has happened in the past.

The Chinese capital was in sombre mood. Massive red banners snapped in the breeze on the Square, the political heart of the nation, though few were moved to tears at the loss of a man who had been out of the public eye for three years. After an initial dip stock

markets in both China and Hong Kong rose, responding to the removal of the uncertainty surrounding Mr Deng. Some brokers believe the next

few days will see a buying spree by foreign investors reassured by the change.

Ten thousand people will be invited to Mr Deng's funeral. His remains will be donated for transplant and his organs for research. His family, in keeping with his wishes, requested there be no solemn bowing before his corpse. His ashes will be scattered at sea.

The 459-member funeral committee declared a six-day period of mourning. At the start of the "memorial meeting" at 10am on Tuesday, sirens will sound throughout the nation for three minutes.

Among tributes to Mr Deng, President Chirac said that in this century "few men have, as much as he, led a vast human community through such profound and determining changes."

After Deng, pages 12, 13

Youth puts ageism to flight in Oxford ballot battle

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

AGE triumphed with the help of beauty at Oxford University yesterday when dons agreed by a majority of two to one to restore voting rights to academics aged over 65.

The decision was a victory for the old guard, who, barred from a postal vote, convinced their younger colleagues that they should continue to have a voice in university affairs. In a huge

response, dons resolved by 962 votes to 475 a month-long row over "blatant ageism" which divided Britain's oldest university.

The battle was between Oxford's ruling council — which tried to lower the age limit for voting on university decisions from 75 to 65 — and 180 venerable scholars and retired senior staff disenfranchised by the move.

Thomas Braun, a tutor in ancient history at Merton College, said it was only fitting that the university should

reinstate the former age limit. Older staff had in effect been barred from Congregation, the university's parliament, by a change in regulations over membership of Oxford committees in November 1995.

This went almost unnoticed until last November when older academics tried to vote on the controversial proposals for a £40 million business school on university playing fields.

"I am glad we have won," Mr Braun said. "Congregation does debate im-

portant issues that concern the future of Oxford so people of all ages feel they have a right to take part."

Ruth Deech, Principal of St Anne's College, who argued for the age limit of 65 in the Congregation debate last month, said: "Those who make the rules at Oxford ought to be subject to them. It did not seem right that people who had left the university, for example because they had retired early, should still be able to participate in the voting process."

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Evasion is no answer to a hard question

Rarely does an exchange at Westminster set the scene for a whole generation of debate. Yesterday's opening speeches on devolution from the Prime Minister and the Labour leader during the constitutional debate created such an occasion. Readers will find in *Hansard* pointers to the years of controversy which may now be imminent: keys to the rise and possible fall of what may be the next government.

The House was full. John Major's speech was, in the best sense, relentless. Without histrionics and at times almost monotonously, he slogged his way through a litany of criticisms of Labour's plans which were, quite simply, unanswerable. He was calm. All his tetchiness fell away in the presence of a case so powerful as to take possession of its advocate as if all he had to do was grip the dispatch box, shut his eyes and let the argument take over. His troops were in the palm of his hand. They cheered solidly, at times wildly.

As Mr Major spoke, Tony Blair demonstrated a curious recent change in his behaviour. The speech was going well for his rival — so he simply refused to listen. Mr Blair chatted to Ann Taylor on one side and George Robinson on the other, scribble notes, and stared around the chamber, but he would not look at Mr Major. It was a strange

discourtesy in a serious debate: like those children who, scolded, cannot admit they are listening.

Time and again, Mr Major enquired as to the whereabouts of an elusive creature for whom the search is now beginning to preoccupy all sides of the House. "Where," cried Mr Major, "is the answer to the West Lothian question?" At times he seemed even more mystified: "What is the answer to the West Lothian question?" he kept asking.

Mr Blair's speech was a



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

triumph of a kind. He will be judged by many to have lost the argument, but he lost the House only once.

It was a knockabout speech. Aware that he was short of a defence, he attacked. He attacked Mr Major personally. He attacked the Tory record on constitutional reform. He took us to Esher and the Unready, to 1834 and to 1911. He attacked sleaze, he mentioned Scott and Nolan, and he called for a government for London.

"But where's your answer to the West Lothian question?"

Tories yelled. "I can and will answer it," snapped Mr Blair. "I will come to it later in my speech."

Then he attacked the Tory approach to Europe and Tory theories of subsidiarity. "But what's the answer to the West Lothian question?" A little patience, please. Next he reminded us that in the 1970s the Tories (when they were devolutionists) never found the answer to the West Lothian question. When Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, interrupted, Mr Blair almost lost his footing but regained it. Later William Hague, the Welsh Secretary, interrupted brilliantly. But nothing dismayed Mr Blair. "And the West Lothian ques-

tion?" bawled the Tories. Mr Blair quoted Margaret Thatcher. He quoted Malcolm Rifkind. But still no answer to the West Lothian question.

"If I can turn, now, from the West Lothian question..." he announced. "But you haven't answered it!" Undismayed by the shouts, the Labour leader moved on from devolution to his plans for the Lords. Brzen at the start and shaky in the middle, Mr Blair finished in style. But Mr Major just sat, smiling gently. And answer to the West Lothian question came there none. Yesterday I called the Labour frontbencher who addressed the cameras Robin Corbett. It was Stuart Bell. I apologise to both.

Labour party 'would apply strict British economic tests'

Blair and Brown unite to signal delay on the euro

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

TONY BLAIR and Gordon Brown have delivered their firmest indications that a Labour government would not sign up to a European single currency in 1999.

Speaking in Washington, Mr Brown put new hurdles in the way of participation in monetary union, making Labour membership during the first wave more unlikely.

And in a BBC interview last night, he said that both he and Mr Blair judged there were "real obstacles" facing Britain and other countries that are increasingly difficult to overcome by 1999. He added: "Getting it right is more important than getting it quickly. We will apply strict British economic tests in the British economic interest."

In a speech today, the Labour leader will claim that there is no difference between Labour's policy and the Tories' formal line on monetary union, the broadest hint that he does not anticipate going into the first wave. Mr Blair will say: "We are keeping our options open to protect

the nation's economic interest."

The Shadow Chancellor's move suggested that he has been convinced by Mr Blair and Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, that a Labour government would be wise to stay out of the central core if a single currency went ahead on January 1, 1999. It came as Mr Major insisted that the Government's position on the single currency had not changed.

Mr Brown, speaking at a meeting in Washington with Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, said a Labour government would examine:
□ The impact on investment by British firms in Britain and Europe;
□ The effect on British financial services;
□ Whether European countries were at a different stage of the economic cycle;
□ Whether there was sufficient flexibility to respond to unexpected problems;
□ Whether it would cost jobs.

Mr Brown said that Labour's concern was that the timetable had been set politically without being properly driven in economic terms. He emphasised that there was a "triple lock" on the decision — the British opt out, a vote of the British Parliament, and a referendum.

Mr Brown spoke as the details emerged of an surprise late-night meeting between Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Mr Clarke to patch up their differences over the single currency. On Wednesday Mr Rifkind broke the Cabinet truce by suggesting that the Government was hostile to a single currency, a remark described by the Chancellor as a "slip of the tongue under pressure".

After a day of confusion Mr Rifkind and Mr Clarke met for a "quiet natter" at the Foreign Secretary's residence to smooth over their differences. A statement issued in the early hours said that they agreed they were "hostile" to a single currency where there had not been sufficient convergence between the participating countries.



Lord Hanson: forecast extremes of wealth and poverty

EMU would be our ruin, says Hanson

A SINGLE currency will reproduce throughout Europe the extremes of stagnation and prosperity which already exist within EU nations, but on a far larger scale, while leaving individual governments powerless to act, the industrialist Lord Hanson said yesterday.

"That would lead to general recession in northern Europe and 'unprecedented' corruption in the south," Lord Hanson said. He also feared that the social chapter — which "New Labour would

quickly sign up for" — would reintroduce the restrictions which had been dismantled over the past 17 years and had led to Britain's miraculous economic performance.

The views of one of Britain's most powerful businessmen in *The Spectator* this week will be music to the ears of Tory Eurosceptics. Lord Hanson said that "most of us" would have voted "against" in the 1975 referendum if they had thought they were voting for a European superstate.

Railway company says sorry with free tickets

By Jonathan Prynn, Transport Correspondent

HUNDREDS of thousands of travellers were offered free rail tickets to anywhere in the country yesterday by a private rail company to apologise for its unreliable service.

Early-morning commuters were the first to benefit when they turned up at stations to be told they did not have to pay for their tickets to London Waterloo.

As word of the offer spread, booking clerks at stations throughout southern England were besieged by demands for free fares to increasingly far-flung destinations. Some customers ordered four or five tickets.

The offer was made by South West Trains, which carries 200,000 London commuters daily, after the chaos caused by a spate of cancellations because it had sacked too many drivers.

As long as the ticket was bought at a station used by SWT, excluding London Waterloo and Clapham Junction, passengers could demand free travel to any of the 2,500 stations in the country.

The tickets were valid for outward and return travel between midnight on Wednesday and midnight last night and return within five days.

Eurostar tickets to Paris and Brussels worth up to £200 were being given away in the morning until the company ruled overseas destinations were not part of the offer at 11am.

Heather Underwood, a booking clerk at Basingstoke station, said: "I gave one bloke a ticket to London and he had started to walk away when it suddenly dawned on him everything was free. He kept coming back and asking for tickets to Aberdeen, Bournemouth, Torquay — absolutely everywhere."

"After he had made about five trips to my counter he had over £1,000 worth of tickets in his pocket. There was nothing I could do, I couldn't refuse him." The most popular destination was Aberdeen with dozens of £90 return tickets being handed out, she said.

Brian Souter, executive chairman of Stagecoach, the Scottish-based bus company that owns SWT, said the company had deliberately not spelt out the full potential of the offer in publicity material at stations.

The exercise has cost the company about £1.2 million, he said, mainly in free tickets to regular commuters. In a letter handed out to passengers, Mr Souter apologised for the disruption caused by a misadvised driver retraining programme.

'Mad Cow' test could give exports green light

Routine, low-cost testing of beef carcasses for "mad cow" disease could become a reality within months if field trials of a new detection technique are successful, it was claimed yesterday. The test takes just over three hours.

Its developers, Eufor Scientific, a Dublin animal diagnostic service company, and Proteus International, a Macclesfield-based drug discovery company, say it would reassure consumers and could be used to screen British carcasses for BSE before export, clearing the way for the beef ban to be lifted.

Compulsory good deeds

The Prince of Wales has hinted that he would like to see a compulsory three-month period of community service for all school-leavers. His idea was expressed in off-the-cuff remarks to volunteer workers during a tour of his charity projects in the East End of London this week. But he is unlikely to find support for a new obligatory form of national military service among the major political parties, nor among charity workers.

Boy detained for knife death

A boy aged 13 who fatally stabbed a teenager during an argument about household chores was yesterday ordered to be detained for three years. Colin MacDonald, 16, of Aberdeen, died from a single blow to his chest inflicted with his own knife on October 16. He had grabbed the younger boy around the neck before challenging him to hit him and had laughed when the boy replied "I'm not going to hit you, I'm going to stab you," the court heard.

Blandford arrested in error

The Marquess of Blandford walked free from 21 hours in custody after being mistakenly arrested for a driving while disqualified at Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Magistrates at Banbury were told that his disqualification had run out because he served an interim ban last year. His solicitor, Michael Stanford-Tuck, said the marquess was considering taking the matter further. "He has been extremely well-behaved for the last year and this is a bad mistake."

£10m cannabis ring guilty

International drug smugglers were convicted of attempting to import £10 million of cannabis into Britain in an operation that killed Alastair Souter, 47, an undercover Dundee Customs officer who was crushed between boats belonging to Customs and the drugs ring. Seven men — three British, three Dutch and an American — were found guilty of smuggling at the High Court in Dunderland. The case against an eighth was not proven.

Channel 5 eyes rival shows

Britain's new television station, Channel 5, has pledged to launch an aggressive bidding war with the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 for the rights to popular programmes such as *Men Behaving Badly*, *Friends* and *Brookside*. Dawn Airey, the new channel's director of programmes, said that she had tried to lure producers of rival programmes such as *Changing Rooms*, *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and *They Think It's All Over*.

Boost for war on poachers

John Gummer announced that Britain was offering £70,000 to train and equip rangers in Asia and Siberia to combat tiger poaching (Nick Nutall writes). The Environment Secretary told the Zoological Society of London's Tigers 2000 meeting that £20,000 of the total would be used to try to develop a genetic test to see if Chinese medicines seized by customs contained illegal material that had been taken from tigers.

Madonna 'devastated'

Madonna is "devastated" at not being nominated for an Oscar for her lead role in *Evita*, according to Alan Parker, the film's director. The singer has remained silent on her failure to win a nomination but Mr Parker told a Buenos Aires newspaper: "She's very disgusted. She hoped that after winning the Golden Globe they would nominate her."

Murder widow misses justice

An accountant's widow died from a brain haemorrhage just hours before the gangster who ordered her husband's murder was jailed for life. Barbara Wilson had attended every day of a five-week trial at Liverpool Crown Court over the shooting of her husband David, 47, at Chorley, Lancashire. Michael Austin, 41, from New Jersey, had feared that Mr Wilson was about to expose a multimillion-pound insurance fraud involving cheap cigarettes.

Rocket may be on seabed

The amateur space rocket test-fired at an army range on Monday may have been lost in the North Sea. Steve Bennett, its maker, says 50-knot winds blowing at the altitude at which its recovery parachute would have been deployed could have pushed it out to sea. Mr Bennett, 32, has offered a £500 reward for the return of the 10ft top stage of his Lex rocket, which disappeared into low cloud over the range at Otterburn, Northumberland.

Sultan's cool plan for desert

An Arab sheikh, Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qasbi, has built a £10 million dome in the desert of the United Arab Emirates to create a frozen home for his collection of rare Arctic plants. Electric currents passed through wires in the roof of the dome, part of a 25-acre botanical garden, can make snow fall to recreate the plant's native conditions, said his horticultural and environmental consultant Philip Swindells. The sultan is one of the world's richest men.

Women's prisons criticised

By Richard Ford

THE chief inspector of prisons today demands a complete shake-up of women's jails after finding bullying, sexual assaults and overcrowding in almost a third of female prisons.

He criticises conditions for hundreds of women held in three jails, including Holloway, as "unsatisfactory" and demands that urgent remedial action be taken.

In the most damning criticism of the treatment of women in prison, Sir David Ramsbotham demands a far-reaching overhaul of their treatment by the appointment of a director of women's prisons with overall responsibility for the ten female prisons, housing a record 2,438 inmates.

Richard Tilt, the Director-General of the Prison Service, admitted that a new and more imaginative approach was needed to meet the needs of the record number of women in jail: "I have to recognise that for too long we have done no more than simply house female prisoners."

Pescado operator freed on appeal

By Richard Duce

A PROSECUTION error led the Court of Appeal yesterday to clear a trawler operator who was blamed for the loss of six lives when the fishing vessel *Pescado* sank off the Cornish coast six years ago.

Although three judges said the appeal case by Joseph O'Connor against a three-year sentence for manslaughter was "threadbare" it ruled his conviction unsafe and he was freed. He said: "I am feeling very happy but very sad for the bereaved."

The ruling provoked anger from relatives of the six and to renewed calls for a public inquiry into the sinking of the *Pescado*. The judges, headed by Lord Bingham, the Lord Chief Justice, ruled that there had been a danger of injustice to Mr O'Connor, 44, when the prosecution was allowed to change the indictment against

him on the twenty-seventh day of his trial at Bristol Crown Court last year.

Mr O'Connor, from Plymouth, had originally been charged with causing the deaths of six named members of the crew after allowing them to go out in what was alleged to be an "unseaworthy, unstable trawler". Mr Justice Mantell, the trial judge, allowed the prosecution to add a wider charge that alleged the unlawful killing of an unnamed crew member through the provision of inadequate safety equipment.

Lord Bingham, sitting with Mr Justices Mitchell and Clarke, said: "Despite the obvious care with which the trial judge approached the amendment we are left with the inescapable conclusion this amendment, made when it was, may very well have



O'Connor: indictment changed during trial

worked injustice to the appellant, threadbare though his case on the merits may have been. It seems to us the effect of this amendment was unfair because it deprived the appellant of the opportunity to

mount the defence he would have mounted had the Crown's case been put in this way from the beginning."

He said the prosecution had been given the opportunity to consider changing the indictment at pre-trial review in December 1995 but had insisted on adopting its course to the "bitter end".

The defence had not then been given the opportunity to re-examine expert witness in detail on whether the crew could have survived in freezing waters if there had been a working life raft. The prosecution alleged that none of the crew was trained to operate a radio, there was no distress beacon and the only lifeboat was found to be unusable when it was recovered.

It had proved impossible to determine the circumstances in which each crew member had died. Only three bodies were recovered.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21 1997

Rescue services criticise decision to make charter trip as Solent 'bubbled like a cauldron'

Three die as policemen sail yacht into storm-lashed seas

By LIN JENKINS
AND ADRIAN LEE

RESCUERS criticised three policemen who took a yacht into notorious waters described as "a bubbling cauldron" during yesterday's storms. Two of the men and a teenager drowned when the boat capsized in the Solent.

The officer who survived clung for six hours to the grounded hull before a couple out walking saw his torch.

Colin Olden of Hamble Inshore Rescue said: "Where they sailed through the Bridge Buoy area, near the Needles, conditions were absolutely horrendous. Winds were gusting up to 55 knots with very high seas. A comparatively small yacht like this would have been in severe difficulties, however good the crew."

"I would not have expected anyone to have gone out in these conditions. Discretion should have been the better part of valour."

A Coastguard spokesman said: "Conditions were pretty dreadful. It was like a bubbling cauldron out there. The crew did not contact the Coastguard for advice on whether it was safe. If they had, we would have advised them in the strongest terms not to put to sea. We were broadcasting the weather warning every two hours."

The victims were Detective



Lindsay Mulford spotted the only survivor. A half-mast flag at Walford police station commemorates the victims, including Detective Constable Upton

Constable Tony Upton, 36, the skipper, who had commendations for bravery; PC Joseph Charnley, 35, a former Royal Marines Commando who served in the Falklands; and David Asquith, 18, the son of Detective Constable Rod Asquith, 48, who was not on board.

The survivor, PC Martin Humble, 30, is about to be promoted to sergeant. The officers had met at Walford police station, southeast London. Yesterday a Metropolitan Police flag flew there at half mast. PC Humble, who

was released from St Mary's Hospital, Newport, yesterday morning told investigators how he clung to the 35ft chartered yacht *Fairview 2* in winds gusting to Force 12. He blew a whistle on his lifejacket and waved a torch to attract help.

The yacht had capsized and was demasted before righting itself. The men had made a mayday call during the 30 seconds before it capsized a second time.

The caller said "Mayday, mayday. Can you hear me?" before transmission ceased.

Bob Woodward, district controller of Lee-on-Solent Coastguard, said: "Unfortunately, he gave no position, no location, no name."

One reason that the stricken yacht was not spotted in one of Britain's busiest shipping channels was because large vessels had heeded the warnings and had taken shelter from the storm, while smaller craft had not put to sea.

As the Beneteau Oceanis 315 racing yacht, en route from Poole to the Hamble, capsized near the Needles on a notori-

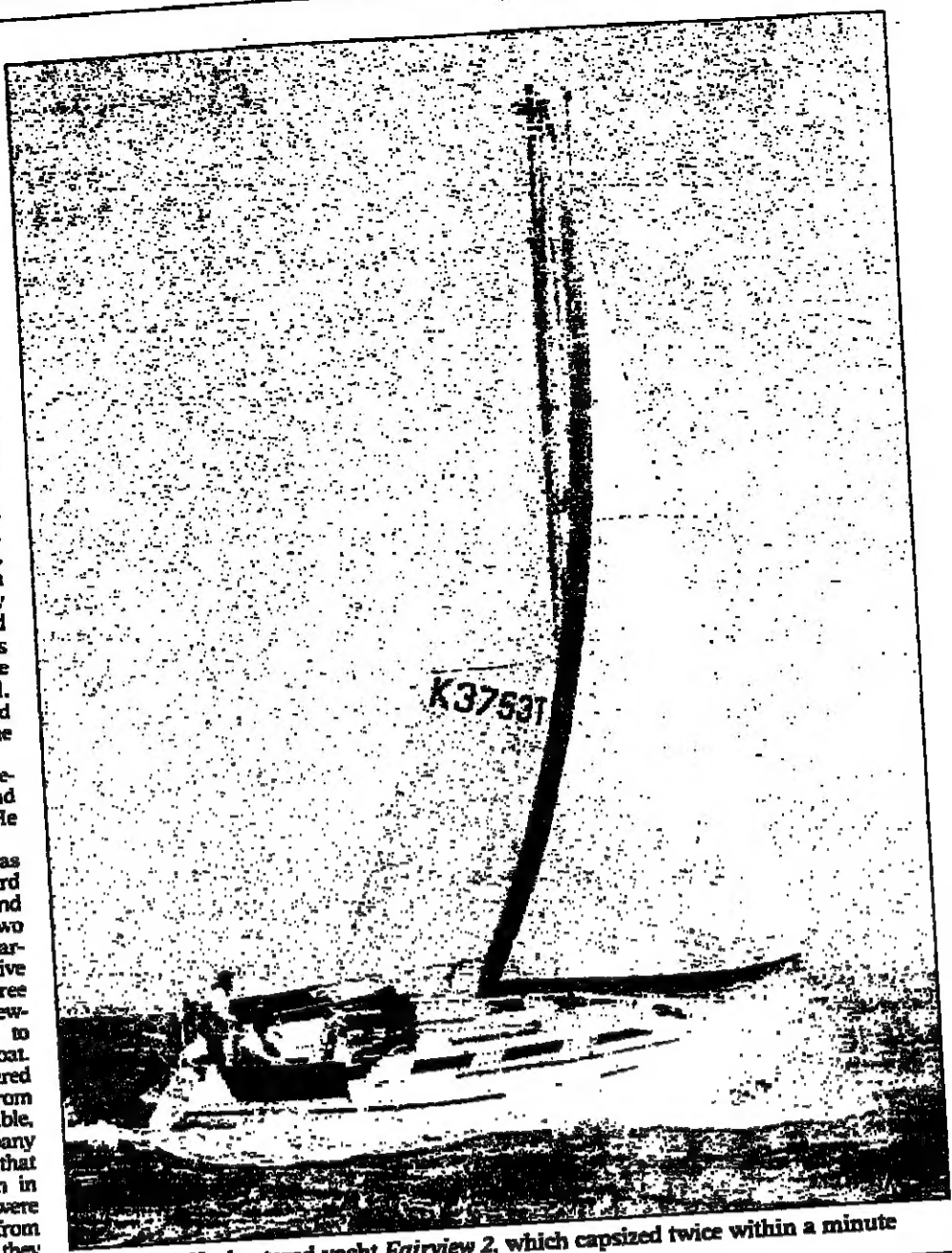
ous shingle bank at 4.35pm on Wednesday, two of the four, including the skipper, were swept overboard. Another was flung into the sea but remained attached to the yacht by a line. His body was later recovered.

PC Humble was saved six hours after the yacht ran aground, 150 yards offshore, when his torch beam was seen by Peter and Lindsay Mulford, who summoned help. After Mr Humble was picked by the Cowes inshore rescue craft Mrs Mulford, 51, took him home and wrapped him in blankets while he waited for the ambulance.

She said: "He was absolutely soaking and freezing and had a badly gashed hand. He was numb with shock."

An air-sea rescue was launched with the coastguard helicopter, six lifeboats and five coastguard teams. Two hours later two bodies wearing lifejackets with reflective strips were spotted, three quarters of a mile off Newtown. Both were taken to Cowes by the Calshot lifeboat.

The four men had chartered the yacht for four days from Fairview Sailing at Hamble, Hampshire. The company said it had been reassured that the vessel was to remain in inland waters. "There were severe weather warnings from the word go. It is obvious they should not have been out."



The 35ft chartered yacht *Fairview 2*, which capsized twice within a minute

Deadly channel where danger strikes rapidly

WHEN the wind is blowing at gale force, the Needles Channel where *Fairview 2* got into difficulty is one of the most dangerous stretches of water on the South Coast.

With Hurst Castle on one side and the Isle of Wight on the other, land is close by, but huge seas can build up very quickly, creating conditions as bad as anywhere far out to sea. The key is that the channel, which drains the western entrance to the Solent, is very narrow yet, with every tide, large volumes of water sluice in and out, creating high waves.

The danger is increased by the way the seabed shelves steeply on either side of the channel. To the north there is the Shingles Bank and to the south the Bridge reef.

The crew of *Fairview 2* appear to have been trying to enter the channel from the west with a very strong and gusty following wind.

It is likely that the 35ft Beneteau may have been rolled by a wave breaking under it, or been caught lying sideways on to the sea. Another possibility is that she was simply knocked flat by a huge gust and dismasted.

In those conditions it would have been almost impossible

Land may be close by but the Needles Channel can be a stern test for sailors, reports Edward Gorman, Times sailing correspondent

to rescue a crew member swept overboard. He would have been quickly lost to the eye between the peaks and troughs of the waves. Trying to haul back a man overboard who was still attached by a harness would have been hard enough. The violent motion of the boat would be a lethal threat.

In order to qualify as a charter vessel under Department of Trade regulations *Fairview 2* should have met stringent safety standards, which would include passing stability tests. Among her inventory should have been a full range of safety equipment including life raft, life jackets, harnesses, flares and a portable VHF radio to back up the main set.

One member of the crew did make a mayday call but he was unable to give vital information about his position. Although he may have known exactly where he was,

it appears the mast came down, taking the VHF aerial with it, before he could complete the message. Even if the yacht was equipped with a satellite positioning system, the information it was telling him would have been no use without a radio.

For some reason he did not complete the transmission with the hand-held VHF set. Either it could not be found, it did not work, or the skipper had it in his pocket when he was swept overboard.

Only one of the policemen on board, the skipper, was a member of the Metropolitan Police Sailing Club, which is based at Mercury marina on the Hamble, near Southampton. The club, which was not involved in the charter of *Fairview 2*, is open to serving officers and their families and has about 500 members.

The club owns two cruising yachts, a Sadler 35 and a Sadler 34, and members can charter them for cruises. The club is also a Royal Yachting Association-recognised sailing school, offering theory and practical courses up to the Ocean Yachtmaster certificate.

The skipper of *Fairview 2* is thought to have attended theory classes at the sailing school up to Yachtmaster standard and had completed a Day Skipper practical exam, which is the lowest RYA qualification, teaching the basics of navigation and managing a yacht in inshore waters.

Navy spy who sold secrets to Russians dies in crash

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

DAVID BINGHAM, one of Britain's most notorious spies, was killed yesterday in a car crash near his home in the Midlands.

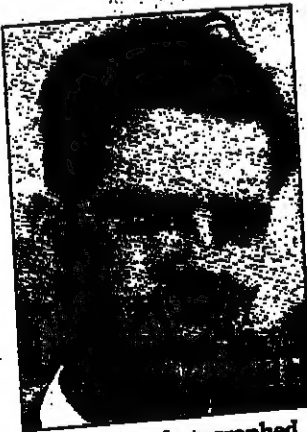
He had served eight years of a 21-year sentence passed on him in 1971 for selling secrets to the Russians.

Bingham, 56, and his dog were killed when his car hit a tree and burst into flames at Snitterfield, near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Police confirmed his identity as David Brough, the name he adopted and hid under after his release from prison in 1981.

Over a period of three years the former naval sub-lieutenant and torpedo expert had systematically photographed the Navy's most sensitive sonar and submarine weapons secrets and passed them on to the Russians.

The judge at Winchester



Bingham: photographed submarine secrets

Crown Court branded his spying as "an amazing act of treachery" and sentenced him to a total of 126 years — to run concurrently — on 12 counts.

His wife Maureen was subsequently sent to prison for two, and a half years for contacting a member of the Soviet Embassy. The couple

were beset with debts; Bingham began spying after his wife visited the Embassy, and he received a total of £2,810 for photographing and passing on the sensitive British and Nato documents to the Soviet Union.

His case, and that of Leonard Hinchliffe, a cypher clerk, led to the setting up of the Security Commission headed by Lord Diplock.

After his release he took on the new identity as David Brough and became a pillar of respectable society and vice president of Bournemouth Conservative Club.

However he was recognised by a former colleague, and fled to a new home — near Stratford — with his second wife, Mary, a cousin whom he married while in prison.

He became manager of an alternative therapy centre called Lifeways, responsible for a team of 25 healers and hypnotherapists.

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'Loner threatened a 'Hungerford' after losing gun licence

By Russell Jenkins and Stewart Tindler

A DISTURBED gun enthusiast who fantasised about a Hungerford-style shooting in a Welsh spa town was jailed for four and a half years for drugs and firearms offences yesterday at Caernarvon Crown Court, north Wales.

Jason Curtis, 28, from Llandrindod Wells, Powys, wrote a four-page account of a recurring dream where he shot the police officers he feared for losing his gun licence two years earlier. Curtis, an unemployed loner who sold cannabis and experimented with LSD, described how he would walk through the streets of the town shooting, killing and maiming passers-by, the spree ending with his death in a shootout with police.

Mr Justice Mance, who described the document as "truly horrific", said what had given most cause for concern was Curtis's representation of himself as a serial killer of police "against whom you apparently bear a grudge".

Curtis had pleaded guilty to four firearms charges, relating to the possession of a pump-action shotgun, rifle parts and ammunition, including home-made "hollow point" shells and a silencer, and drug charges including possession of cannabis with intent to supply and possession of LSD. Curtis was given 27 months each for the drugs and firearms charges, to run consecutively.

Dyfed-Powys Police were convinced last night that their action had averted a potential massacre. They acted on the advice of a clinical psychologist who said Curtis possessed the characteristics of a spree killer like Michael Ryan, the Hungerford gunman.

Keith Turner, Dyfed-Powys assistant chief constable, said: "The drugs and access to guns really does frighten the life out of me. Who knows what an individual hallucinating from such abuse would be capable of. If he had not stopped we could have had another Hungerford."

Curtis, who took to dealing in drugs after his washing machine repair business collapsed, has spent eight



Curtis fantasised about shooting policemen

months in custody, mostly in Ashworth special hospital, awaiting sentencing. He has undergone numerous psychiatric examinations but, the court was told, each medical inquiry concluded, to a greater or lesser extent, that he was not a suitable case for treatment at a secure hospital.

Curtis became involved with weapons and violence while a child. At the age of 14 he exhibited a drawing in a local show depicting a panorama of murders. When police found the drawing years later Curtis had written "DEATH" in large letters on the back.

He was born in Sheffield but spent most of his childhood in Bulth Wells. His family moved to Llandrindod Wells and Curtis went into the family business of repairing washing machines. His mother and father separated, his father retired and Curtis ran the business until it collapsed in 1995.

The father had a firearms licence and his son also acquired one. Curtis kept an array of firearms equipment, including a shoulder holster which figured in his fantasy, pamphlets and books.

The court was told that Curtis was picked up last year on a routine check. Police found 22 cannabis plants and an "extraordinary quantity" of ammunition and gun components; all held illegally.

Curtis, the court was told, had shot at the Abbeycwmhir club and became unofficial

armourer. By 1994 he had five shotguns, four automatic pistols, three revolvers and two rifles. He lost his licence after an argument with a police officer who had visited him to question him about an application to increase his collection. Curtis told the officer he would not hesitate to shoot any burglar trying to steal guns.

Jonathan Austin, for the defence, told the court that Curtis was not obsessive about guns and meant no harm either to the police or the public. He complained that the police had briefed the press on the contents of the document and that it had been denied to the defence. He said the case had "snowballed" out of proportion to the offences.

The police were so concerned by the threat posed by Curtis that the three officers named in the fantasy have been offered counselling and a transfer.



Boys' own: Christine Cubitt and her youngest son Edward, seven, with the new magazine she produced after her sons complained about a lack of reading matter

Mother launches magazine to help boys to be boys

By Paul Wilkinson

A MOTHER is launching her own glossy magazine for boys today, after her young sons complained there was nothing on the market for that difficult age when a chap is too old just for children's comics and too young for men's lifestyle guides.

Under the name Boys 1st, Christine Cubitt's publication includes entertainment, comic-strip adventures and general-interest articles. There will be girls but no sex, unlike the more controversial publications for pre-teen females.

Mrs Cubitt, 39, of Eldwick, near Bingley, West Yorkshire, is a former secretary and PA whose only previous experience of magazine production was a desk-top publishing course. She said: "The boys had their comics and football mags but, unlike the girls' market which is saturated, there was nothing of general interest for the eight to 13-year-old."

"I wanted something that would entertain them but educate them too. Boys are notoriously bad readers, so it

had to be presented in a fashion they could accept."

The £1.60 monthly magazine is put together on her home computer before going for processing in Leeds. Her three sons James, 11, Robert, 9, and Edward, 7, act as editorial consultants. James appears on the front cover. Her husband, David, who runs a financial services business, helps out and her mother keeps the books.

Today's 20-page first edition includes a cartoon strip on a boy who becomes a super-hero to fight computer-created villains, and a Famous Five-type serial about four children who discover gold in a Cornish mine. There is an interview with Nick Parkes, the creator of Wallace and Gromit, and a science page. The material is produced by a team of outside contributors. A general-knowledge competition offers a chance to win a set of children's encyclopedias.

"My sons think it's brilliant," she said. "But they would, wouldn't they?"

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PRUDENTIAL

Police alerted by chilling fantasy

By Stewart Tindler, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

JASON CURTIS'S fantasy of revenge on the police who robbed him of his beloved guns terrified the officers who found the four-page account of his plans for a killing spree in the town in which he lived. The racy style, crude spelling and punctuation mistakes could not hide Curtis's anger and violence.

After the document was discovered in personal computer, Curtis told police that he had written it in 1995 when he decided to record the details of a dream he had every week. The story begins: "It was warm sunny morning on the 8th July and the people of Llandrindod Wells went to their normal, merry way... no one would have guessed of the holocaust to come."

"He thought of all the great times he had shooting with his dogs, all that freedom and fresh air but how he felt trapped like a wild animal or a coiled spring waiting to be set

free, released... Somebody is going to have to pay. He walked to his window and looked out. That's who. Those bastards out there, every one of them."

He arms himself with two pistols and over 200 rounds of ammunition including hollow points he had made for hunting but now "were to be used for hunting the enemy".

At the police station he asks to see his first victim. As Officer A comes out he is greeted by "Jason" and fear shows on his face as the gunman takes aim. "Jason" gripped the pistol with both hands and fired twice at the large man's face.

More officers are killed before "Jason" goes out into the town and turns his gun on men, women and children. "Jason" walks home and opens the windows to gaze down at the total mass panic. Then as police begin to gather he reloads his gun.



The collection of firearms that police found at Curtis's home after stopping him in a routine check

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Health screening may do more harm than good, say experts

MASS health screening programmes may harm healthy people while helping only a few who are sick, experts say.

Being wrongly identified as a sufferer from a disease — a "false positive" result — or alerted to a potential risk can cause high levels of anxiety which remain even after subsequent testing has shown no sign of the condition, research has shown.

Screening tests for conditions ranging from breast cancer to foetal abnormalities are under scrutiny by the NHS Technology Assessment Programme to ensure they

The negative psychological effects of screening must be balanced against the benefits, say two researchers. Jeremy Laurance reports

give value for money. Earlier this month, the programme rejected prostate cancer screening because there was no evidence that early treatment improved survival.

Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, Dr Sarah Stewart Brown and Dr Andrew Farmer, of the Health Services Research Unit at Oxford University, say that screening programmes affect a large

number of people in order to benefit a few. "A small adverse effect on quality of life ... could have an impact on the public health which outweighs any gain," they say.

Checking blood pressure at work may make people less healthy, as those with high readings tend to be off sick more and have greater anxiety even though they require no treatment. Cholesterol testing

may also send people to an early grave. Men who know they are at high risk of dying of heart disease may be more inclined to take other risks. This has been suggested as a reason why studies of cholesterol testing have shown a decrease in deaths from heart disease but an increase in total deaths.

Some people view a good screening result as rendering

them immune to health risks. Screening may then have a negative effect if people shown to be free of cancer or with low cholesterol become resistant to health advice and continue to smoke or eat high-fat diets.

Before new screening programmes are introduced, the benefits of a small increase in life expectancy or reduction in disability for a small number of people have to be balanced against the range of harmful psychological effects which might emerge among those screened, Dr Stewart-Brown and Dr Farmer say.

Benefit should overcome psychological fears

HAVING worked in screening at Bupa for 25 years, I know the problems, but the medical advantages it offers should not be obscured.

Health screening programmes are more difficult to establish successfully in the NHS and public sector generally than they are in occupational health schemes or in private medicine, where patient compliance is better. The problems of translating the benefits derived by individuals who have paid for their screening themselves or through employers to the population at large are considerable.

It is undeniable that early diagnosis and the time-consuming but regular medical consultations available as a result of screening contribute to the disparity in health care between the rich and the poor. That disparity is a good reason to spend more on, and improve, the NHS but not a reason to discourage competent health screening.

The argument put forward in the *British Medical Journal* that the

anxiety experienced by a small number of patients because of the fear of screening, and the apprehension which they might feel while awaiting results, should be given preference over "the benefits of a small increase in life expectancy, or a reduction in disability, of a small number of people" is unsupportable.

That a life should be sacrificed because a small minority of people are pathologically frightened of doctors and medical tests would find little favour with those whose breast cancer was found by the time when it could

have been successfully removed, whose stroke or coronary thrombosis was averted by judicious numbers, whose diabetes was dealt with before their sight, heart, arteries and peripheral nerves were destroyed, or even with those whose depression was treated before marriages were destroyed and suicide was contemplated.

Nor would the patient whose cancer of the lung could have been protected in time, but wasn't, be reconciled to an early death because he, or increasingly she, was not X-rayed lest a sense of false security encouraged them to

continue smoking. The risk of lung cancer from smoking continues for many years after the last cigarette.

Efforts to improve the health of the overwhelming majority who are psychologically well balanced should not be hindered by anxieties over the frailty of a small minority. Better, and less frightening, ways of screening this minority should be sought.

The report in the *BMJ* concludes we need to know the social and psychological cost of screening before deciding whether individual screening programmes should or should not be provided. What we as doctors need to know is whether patients' health and life expectancy would be improved if they were to have the test, and we should seek ways of so motivating them that they attended regularly.

The political and social implications which are raised by screening will have to be solved by the politicians, working with medical advice, and are not the primary concern of the doctor.



Dr Thomas Stuttford



Tracey and Ian Walton at the High Court. Below, Mr Walton's verse

Poets' union says sorry for 'vanity' jibe at publisher

By ALAN HAMILTON AND AUDREY MAGRICE

A FEW LINES FROM THE VICTOR

*Small committees locked in smoke-filled rooms
Would tell the nation's writers only they
Can judge their work and only they can say
Which poems should be published
Which should not.*

*But poetry, at last, has won the day.
It is for all and not for an elite.
They tried to guard their sanctum but they lost
The fight, and now can bear the cost*

NOT gods, nor men, nor even booksellers, have put up with poets being second-rate, wrote Horace. Yesterday the Poetry Society paid dearly for suggesting that a publisher took money to put up with unpublished verse.

The society, the nearest thing poor struggling creators of verse have to a trade union, was forced to make an unreserved High Court apology for suggesting that a Cambridge publishing house accepted payment from poets to issue work which would never otherwise see the light of day.

In a statement read out in court, the society, founded in 1909, said that allegations published in the spring 1995 edition of its quarterly journal were wholly unjustified and without foundation. In an article entitled "Vanity Presses and Doggy Competitions", the magazine had claimed that Forward Press, a Peterborough-based publisher, was involved in so-called vanity publishing, where authors

paid publishers to print their work, instead of the other way round, which is the usual arrangement.

The article further accused Ian Walton, founder of Forward Press and himself a poet, of having no interest in literature. The society agreed to pay the £58,000 legal costs incurred by Forward Press, which has 60 employees and a £1.2 million annual turnover, in bringing the action.

Mr Walton and his wife Tracey, co-owners of Forward Press, claimed that their business had flourished after the article in *Poetry News*. They said it was a slur on the 70,000 mainly unknown poets whose work featured in the 1,000

titles published by the company.

Roger McGough, the fairly well-known poet who tried to mediate in the dispute, said last night: "It was a rather sad state of affairs. The whole thing has cost the Poetry Society a lot of money. I think Forward Press went too far on the issue."

After the hearing, Mr Walton said that the court ruling was a victory for the punter poet over glibby elitism. He could not, however, resist composing a verse on the spot for *The Times* to mark the occasion.

As Horace also wrote, you have to put up with a lot to please poets.

Prawns and oysters are best buy as gales hit deep-water fishing

GALES have affected supplies of fish this week and prices have risen, but supplies of shellfish are little affected so mussels, at about £2.25 for a 2kg bag, or oysters, from 35p to 45p each, are a good buy (Robin Young writes).

Scallops are currently in excellent condition and available in large sizes. Prawns, about £2.20 a pound for frozen, shell-on varieties, are a best buy and oil-rich fish such as Scottish mackerel, at about £1.50 a pound. Advertised promotions include:

Asda: diced turkey thigh £2.53 kg, pork shoulder £2.49 kg, rump steak £7.49 kg, small avocados 19p each, green seedless grapes 79p lb. Bagnards: whole fresh chicken £3.99 for 1.9kg, cod fillets £2.34 lb, large eggs 59p for six, unsalted Dutch back bacon rashers £1.89 for 400g.

Co-op (CWS): stewing steak £2.99 kg, parsnips 40p for 500g, Danish Blue £1.99 lb, Cox apples 89p kg, rich roast coffee granules 99p. Debenhams: topside/silver-side top rump £1.99 lb, back bacon 99p for 200g, medium sized eggs 89p doz. Harrods: chicken and bacon pies £2.29 small or £4.49 large, pan-cakes with tomato and cheddar cheese or spinach and ricotta £1.99 each.

Islehead: skinless chicken breast fillets £6.49 for 1.3kg, dry cure back bacon £1.49 for 198g, king prawn ring £4.99 for 340g, baby carrots 69p for 907g. Lidl: Save: rad salmon halves £1.23 for 213g, garden peas 24p for 300g, cut green beans 28p for 250g, Sugar Puffs £1.39 for 450g. Marks & Spencer: low-fat vegetable Indian meal £1.99 for 454g, Chinese menu for two £4.99 pack, chicken breast portions £3.29 for four, twin-pack lemon chicken £4.98 for 2 x 340g, creamy potato gratin £1.49 for 454g. Morrisons: fryling steak/topside/silver-side £2.19 lb, oysters

£3.99 for 12, cod roe £2.69 lb, kiwi fruit 35p for eight, plums 79p lb, Cox apples 35p lb. Safeway: pork chops £3.99 for eight (800g), fresh chicken £4.39 for 2.27 kg, celery 45p pack, parsnips 35p lb, cantaloupe melons £1.29 each, white seedless grapes 99p lb. Sainsbury's: fillet steak £13.88 kg, boneless pork leg joints £3.32 kg, smoked salmon £6.65 for 400g, Little Gem lettuce 99p for two, white seedless grapes 99p lb. Somerfield: boneless pork loin steaks £6.15 kg, salmon steaks

£6.61 kg, rump steak £7.42 kg, gammon ham 69p lb, leeks 59p lb, potatoes 89p for 5kg, cantaloupe melons £1.39 each. Tesco: beef fore ribs £4.29 kg, boneless leg of pork £2.99 kg, half leg of lamb £5.79 kg, sprouts 69p lb, raw peeled tiger prawns £1.29 lb, leeks 49p lb, new potatoes 19p lb, Cox apples 49p lb. Waitrose: poussin £2.39 for 800g, korma/Chinese/Thai stir fries £1.09 each, spinach 79p for 250g, baby onions 79p for 200g, root ginger 99p lb, tartie provencale £1.55 for 410g.

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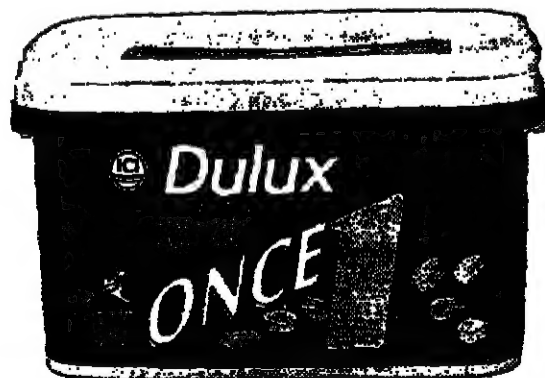
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Can Ashdown find more than a niche market for tax candour?

The central paradox of the general election is that while a majority of voters want a change of government, many do not believe it will make a real difference to their lives. Any government would have limited freedom of manoeuvre on economic and social policy. So is the choice for voters merely between an experienced though stale team and an inexperienced though fresh team — a change of management rather than of policies?

Of course, the main parties disagree sharply over the constitution, as yesterday's Commons debate showed. But I doubt if Tony Blair will be able to sustain his current line about not reducing the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster and of altering the traditional convention of having the detailed examination of any devolution Bill on the floor of the Commons, and instead having it upstairs in a smaller standing committee. That almost invites the Lords to put forward wrecking amendments.

Labour is torn between grand rhetorical statements about the need for a change, as in the peroration to Mr Blair's speech yesterday, and its "don't frighten the voters" caution over policy details. Labour has this year narrowed or eliminated differences with the Government on taxes, public spending and, now, the single currency to remove possible electoral vulnerability. The Liberal Democrats are trying to exploit Labour's risk-averse approach — "warm words, vague promises and woolly evasions", as its *Priorities for Britain* document said yesterday. This attitude has increasingly irritated Mr Blair who would have liked a statement on joint priorities

for government, but the Liberal Democrats have been reluctant to get so close. The Liberal Democrats have wanted to differentiate themselves: hence, their election slogan unveiled yesterday, *Making the Difference*. This steers a careful course between trying to appear sharp-edged, particularly on taxation, and being self-consciously left-wing, as some party activists would like. Yesterday's document does carve out some distinctive territory, notably an unequivocal commitment to raise income tax by 1p to finance an additional £2 billion a year on education. The

previous qualification, "if necessary", has been dropped. This, and a parallel promise on the NHS, are at best partial answers, but at least they recognise the existence of the underlying spending and tax dilemmas facing any government. The party has also promised to make the Bank of England operationally independent, tax pollution and take Britain into a single currency in the first wave.

Paddy Ashdown has two problems — first, making the Liberal Democrat voice heard, though that will be much easier when the election campaign starts; and, second, proving that there is more than a niche market for candour. Some voters will probably back higher taxes in return for proven improvements in public services, but are there enough of them in its target seats in the South West?

Labour faces the opposite dilemma: how far their caution undermines any claim that a Blair government could make a difference. Several spokesmen have recently sought to show that Labour would make a difference, just as senior ministers are eager to show they are still full of ideas. Following Gordon Brown's Crossland lecture last week, David Blunkett last night made his case in a fascinating speech in Birmingham. What was so interesting was his rejection of traditional cash transfers between groups to reduce social divisions. Instead, of the "welfarism of the past", he talked about reviving self-help movements: training and education and a renewed commitment to public services. Mr Blunkett believes in activist government to produce self-reliant individuals: a return, as he said, to the vision of George Bernard Shaw. But Labour still has to offer better answers as to how all this will be financed.

PETER RIDDELL

You are selling out to the separatists, Major tells Labour

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

JOHN MAJOR accused Labour yesterday of putting party before country with its plans for Scottish and Welsh assemblies. Opening a Commons debate on the constitution, the Prime Minister said that the Opposition's proposals would "undermine the unity of the United Kingdom and erode the authority of this Parliament". He said that any MP backing plans for a tax-raising Scottish parliament and a toothless Welsh Assembly should be ashamed.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats might believe that by advocating the devolution of power, they could buy off the separatists who wanted full independence for Scotland and Wales. "I believe they are selling out to the separatists," he challenged Tony Blair to justify a system that would stop Scottish MPs sitting at Westminster from making policy directly affecting their own constituencies because that would be the responsibility of a Scottish parliament.

"The Shadow Chancellor would not be able to vote on health, education or other important matters relating to his constituents in Dunfermline, but he could get stuck in in Dagenham, closing grammar schools, abolishing GP fundholding practices and all the other nonsense that Labour supports."

Mr Major also called on Mr Blair to say why Scottish MPs should take part in English policy-making, when English MPs would lose their say over Scottish affairs. He said that Mr Blair had argued previously that Labour's answer was the same as it had always been. "What is it? When is it? It is as elusive as the Loch Ness monster. Has anyone seen it or heard it?"

Mr Major said that giving a Scottish parliament the right to increase income tax by up to 3p above the British rate could leave the average person in Scotland £6 a week worse off. It would cause huge confusion for companies such as Kwikfit, which is based in Edinburgh

and has 4,000 staff in England and 1,200 in Scotland. "They are all paid from the payroll in Edinburgh. Would they all pay the tartan tax, or would Kwikfit be expected to apply different tax rates to different employees?"

Mr Major said that Labour wanted to tamper with the House of Lords, despite its value as a revising chamber and a forum for debate. By proposing to remove the voting rights of hereditary peers, Labour risked creating "the largest and most powerful quango in history".

The final lunacy was reform of the voting system. Proportional representation — on which Labour's view was very murky — would mean permanent coalition governments and endless backroom deals.

Mr Blair produced a string of comments made in the past by present Cabinet ministers in support of devolution for Scotland. "Naturally the Tories are entitled to change their minds. But let them no longer insult our intelligence

and that of the British people by pretending that a policy they used to espouse in virtually every detail means the end of civilisation as we know it."

He said that Mr Major had "not one positive proposal to make". If the Tories were so opposed to Scottish and Welsh assemblies, why did they not commit a future Tory government to abolishing them?

Mr Blair turned his attack on hereditary peers, arguing that they were only supported by Tories because most of them were Tories. "If the majority were Labour, I bet the joys of democracy would erupt on the benches opposite."

Mr Blair also indicated that some senior Tories had spoken out against the Lords, telling MPs that William Hague, the Welsh Secretary, had called peers "silly".

Michael Forsyth, rose four times to challenge Mr Blair. He agreed that the Tories had supported devolution in the 1970s, but said they had abandoned the policy because they could not find a way to answer the West Lothian question.

And Mr Hague asked Mr Blair: "If you are so interested in what I said 17 years ago... what will you tell us whether you agree with everything you said 17 years ago, or indeed with anything you said 17 years ago?"

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, accused the Government of scare-mongering about constitutional change. "It is not a Scottish parliament that poses a threat to the United Kingdom... it's the continuing and contemptuous rejection of the Scottish and Welsh will for more control over their own affairs that poses the real threat."

Ministers defeat peers over guns Bill

By James Landale, Political Reporter

THE Government's gun control legislation cleared its final parliamentary hurdle last night after pro-shooting peers gave up further opposition to the measure.

The Firearms (Amendment) Bill, which will ban large handguns and require owners to keep exempted small-bore weapons in secure gun clubs, will now receive royal assent within a few weeks and should be in force by early summer.

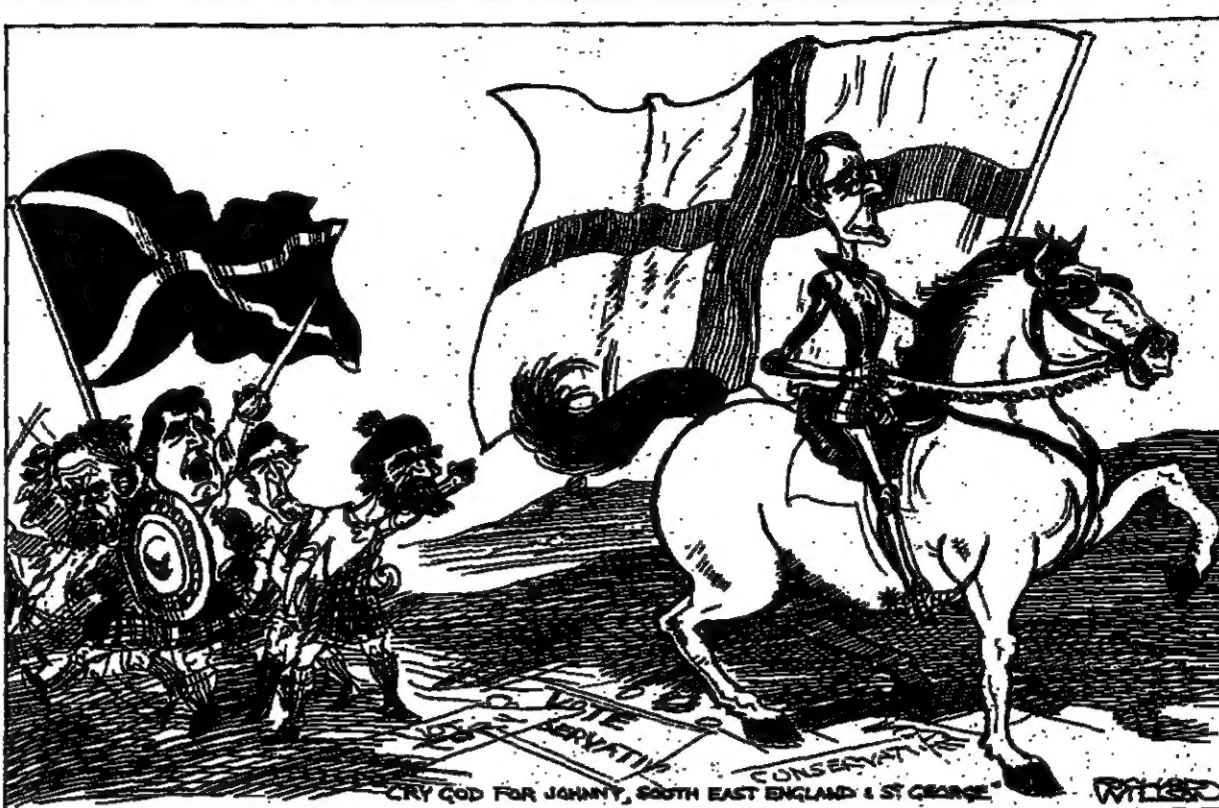
Many peers still voiced their concerns at the Bill, but said it would be pointless to send it back to the Commons.

This week, MPs rejected by large majorities two amendments from the Lords that would have given compensation to clubs and dealers. They also threw out a proposal to allow owners to dismantle their guns, keeping part at home, and part at a club.

Pro-shooting peers insisted that these measures would make life easier for those thousands in the firearms industry whose livelihoods will be destroyed. But they said that they had taken their opposition as far as they could. There had been fears that peers would send the Bill back to MPs, with the risk of killing the measure through lack of parliamentary time.

One pro-shooting Labour peer, Lord Stoddart of Swindon, pushed the so-called disassembly amendment to a vote but was defeated by 197 to 24, a government majority of 173. All other substantial amendments were passed without a vote.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill, a Liberal Democrat, moved a new amendment asking the Government to look into the possibility that the Bill might breach the European Convention on Human Rights. Although Lord Lester withdrew the amendment after a short debate, he insisted that it be put to a vote. Peers voted against it by 160 to 24.



Blair backs Howarth for Welsh stronghold

THE Tory defector Alan Howarth has applied to stand for the Labour stronghold of Newport East with the full backing of Tony Blair (Andrew Pierce writes).

But any attempt to impose him as candidate will meet strong resistance from the local party, which was taken by surprise when the sitting MP, Roy Hughes, decided to stand down at the general election. Labour has a 9,999 majority in the seat.

Mr Howarth, MP for Stratford-on-Avon and a one-time



Howarth: self-belief

Howarth to secure a seat. His defection was a crowning achievement of the Blairite reform of the party. Mr Howarth, 51, said: "I will ask the Newport East constituency party to consider me. It is of course a decision for them."

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Lottery's £137m heralds renaissance of museums

We need have no doubts about the popularity of our museums, they are visited by as many people as attend football matches or go to the cinema. Visitor numbers continue to grow, although over the past 20 years many of our museums, both national and provincial, have been neglected, demoralised and desperately underfunded.

The vision and enthusiasm of the Victorians that helped to build this country's stupendous inheritance of museums and collections has been eroded. However, the National Lottery has provided an opportunity to bring about a renaissance in this field.

Even before yesterday's announcement, the Heritage Lottery Fund had spent £160 million on 98 museum projects. They include such diverse ventures as the Eym Museum in

Derbyshire, the Roald Dahl Gallery in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, the Jute Museum in Dundee, the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh and the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford.

Our priorities are not the creation of new museums. There are already some 2,500 in this country. But in exceptional circumstances we have awarded grants to new buildings of outstanding architectural significance which fill a gap in housing existing collections. They include the Richard and Macdonald's library for the Ruskin Archive at Lancaster University and Sir Norman Foster's display hangar for the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

The lottery fund's primary concern must be to look after the museums we have and to bring them up to date. Yesterday's announcement, the first round of our major museum programme,

Lord Rothschild, the Chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, explains how a Victorian vision of "instruction and entertainment" will be redefined for today

will, we hope, help to redefine what the 1845 Act that set up arts and science museums described as "instruction and entertainment of the inhabitants". This objective has expanded enormously beyond what was expected in the 19th century.

Lecture theatres, cafes and shop are necessary side attractions. Many 19th century buildings have had to be adapted to social amenities. It may well be the case that without these facilities, the 19th-century museum would not survive.

For more than a century Manchester has wanted to build an extension on the

empty site next to the City Art Gallery; now it will happen. We have also been able to help some of the national museums on a significant scale. The National Portrait Gallery scheme will take people to its top floors, which only 20 per cent of its 300,000 annual visitors see. The National Gallery will have a new gallery for Tudor paintings, a rooftop restaurant and a lecture theatre.

There is an important double dividend to this scheme: the additional rooms will allow the National Gallery to display better its growing 19th-century collection and will provide the ideal setting for an

important group of 18th and 19th-century landscapes which have been promised to the gallery. The east end of Wilkins's building will at last be returned to the National Gallery, making sense of the facade.

Technology will dramatically increase the scope for "museums without walls". I agree with Neil MacGregor, the Director of the National Gallery, that electronic media could help to achieve the 19th-century ideal that everybody should be able to enjoy these great museums and collections, if possible free of charge. The National Gallery, for example, wants to put a complete visit on the Internet; you will be able to "come into" the gallery on screen, go round every room, look at every picture, find out about it, and pursue the bibliography and particular information.

Then there is the question of physical access to collections. So rich and extensive are our collections that many are not displayed or accessible for study. I hope that we can adopt the slogan "sweeping out the attics and cellars" of the nation, recently used by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Today's headline figures are for large amounts of money — 23 grant allocations totalling £137 million, with total project costs of £204 million — which will be drawn down over a period of years. In addition, we felt it right to offer development funding for such schemes as the National Coal Mining Museum and the National Railway Museum, both in Yorkshire.

Breathing life back into museums' lungs will be a great achievement for the National Lottery. Urban parks will have their turn next: a large number of grants will be announced next month.

Manchester fares best in nationwide grants

Funding aims to revive cash-starved galleries

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

GALLERIES throughout Britain yesterday received their largest single injection of cash since the Museums Act of 1945, which decreed that town councils could spend money on public collections of art and science.

Some £137 million was shared out between 23 institutions and archival projects yesterday, rejuvenating cash-starved collections whose once grand buildings have fallen into decline. However, recipients have to raise £45 million in matching partnership funding. Some institutions have already raised their share; others still face a struggle.

The money will enable many to expand exhibition spaces and facilities, showing important works of art that have been relegated to store-rooms since the last century. It will allow others to preserve historic holdings that would otherwise crumble away.

One of the largest grants went to Manchester, with £35 million split between three museums. About £15 million was allocated to the city art gallery, enabling one of England's foremost regional collections to do justice to its vast holdings: at present only 5 per cent of its 25,000 works of art is seen by the public.

Kate Farmer of Manchester City Art Gallery said: "People have been donating works for the past 150 years, but the building is not adequate to show them. With the new plans, we will be able to show 50 per cent of our fine art and 30 per cent of the decorative arts."

The gallery has just sent 30 Turner watercolours on tour to America. "We've had them for 100 years, but never been able to show them," she said. The money would allow a

MUSEUM GRANTS	
Manchester Art Gallery	£15m
British Film Institute National Film and Television Archive, London	£14m
Manchester Museum	£12m
National Portrait Gallery, London	£11.9m
Manchester Museum of Science and Industry	£8.8m
Hollies Science and Arts Centre, St Helens	£8.3m
Industrial Museum, Swindon	£7.98m
Wallace Collection, London	£7.24m
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	£6.3m
National Football Museum	£5.6m
Reading Town Hall and Museum	£3.85m
Museum of Scottish Country Life, East Kirkbride	£3.81m
Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery	£3.75m
Cambridge University Art Collection	£2.5m
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth	£1.95m
Courtauld Institute, London	£1.88m
Oxfordshire County Museum of Social History, Woodstock	£1.82m
Museum in the Park, Stroud	£1.82m
Museum of Domestic Architecture and Design, Barnet	£1.64m
Welsh State Museum, Gwynedd	£1.61m
Museum of the History of Science, Oxford	£1.19m
National Waterways Museum, Gloucester Dock	£1.14m
Wald & Downland Open Air Museum, Sussex	£89,750
Grants towards development costs:	
National Coal Mining Museum, Wakefield	
National Railway Museum, York	
Approved in principle:	
Ballymena Area Museum of folk-life	
Big Pit development plan, Torfaen, S Wales	
Arts and Heritage Centre, Rochdale	
Towneley Hall Development Project	

correctly air-conditioned room to be built.

The museum also has a fine collection of Pre-Raphaelites and 20th century masters such as Giacometti and Bacon: they too are generally in storage. The grant will allow the gallery to greatly improve its two listed 19th-century buildings, designed in classical style by Charles Barry. Three new floors of galleries will be created with environmental controls to meet international standards. The basements, crammed with rack upon rack of pottery, ceramics and silverware, will be opened to the public. It is hoped the work

will help to double visitor numbers by 2000.

The Manchester Museum, a combined natural sciences and humanities museum with some five million specimens, received £12 million to improve its displays. Its departments, from archaeology to zoology, are important research centres in their own right, with the natural sciences collections featuring specimens dating back to 1803. These are invaluable sources of plant DNA from a world before pollution.

The city's Museum of Science and Industry, which combines displays on the history

of air and space travel with social history, received £8.8 million for improving its facilities.

National museums in London also received substantial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund: £7.24 million to the Wallace Collection and £11.9 million to the National Portrait Gallery. Some £1.88 million went to the Courtauld Institute in London to complete the architectural restoration of the north block of Somerset House, the 18th-century masterpiece of Sir William Chambers.

John Murdoch, director of the Courtauld, which holds one of the world's finest collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, said: "It will be wonderful for everyone to see our great collections displayed in these peerless rooms, fully restored to their original splendour."

Some £1.64 million was awarded to the Silver Studio Collection at the Museum of Domestic Architecture and Design in Barnet. The collection, started in 1880, boasts 40,000 wallpaper and textile designs from the 1880s to 1960s, but all are housed in unsuitable conditions. The grant will support the building of a new museum.

The Victoria & Albert Museum expressed disappointment that its application was turned down. It was seeking £23 million towards the £31 million redevelopment costs of the 15 British galleries, the core collection featuring masters from Pugin to Mackintosh.

Alan Borg, its director, said: "To open in 2001, we needed to start clearing the galleries and dismantling the historic rooms from this summer. That's not going to be possible now." The gallery has, however, been told that it can submit a further application for the project's next stage.



Making way for something bigger: the classical-style Gallery Four will be destroyed to create higher walls

British art comes back into orbit on the Tate's 2001 space odyssey

HUNDREDS of little-seen works by British artists will be brought out of storage under a £31 million programme to improve display space at the Tate Gallery, with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund (Marcus Binney writes).

Nicholas Serota, the director, said yesterday that the new galleries would open in 2001. The opportunity has arisen because vast collections of modern art will be journeying to the newly converted Bankside power station on the South Bank in 2000.

Mr Serota said: "We are re-dedicating our Millbank building to the original purpose of its founder, Sir Henry Tate, as the national gallery of British art. The

THE TATE GALLERY

new galleries will allow us to display 700 to 800 British paintings compared with the current 500 out of a total holding of 3,000. Rotation will allow still more to be seen." They include works by Hogarth, Gainsborough, Stubbs, Blake, Constable, the pre-Raphaelites, Sickert, Bacon and Moore.

The funding is being helped by an £18.75 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and an anonymous American donation of £7 million. Although the Tate appears to fill its island site, lower galleries have been closed around a

courtyard area owing to subsidence. Alexander Nairn, the project director, said: "The new funds will enable us to make a much-needed entrance in the flank of the Tate, to begin opening the whole of the lower level. New galleries here will have ceiling heights of 14 feet, which are critical to the display of important British paintings."

The scheme means destroying Gallery Four, erected in 1926 by Sir Joseph Duveen. John Miller, the architect, said: "It has charm, but it's not good for hanging pictures. English Heritage has agreed it can go."

Interview, page 33

Second chance for The Third Man

FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE

HUNDREDS of thousands of historic films, newsreels and documentaries will be saved for posterity following an award of almost £14 million to the British Film Institute.

The BFI's collection includes original prints of classics ranging from the 1949 movie *The Third Man*, starring Orson Welles, the children's television series *The Magic Roundabout* and Ealing films

such as *The Tiffield Thunderbolt* (1952).

The archive, housed at three sites, holds more than 300,000 titles, dating from 1895 to the present day. The grant will enable work to be carried out on five million feet of film a year from a vast backlog of uncatalogued material, much of which is unstable nitrate-based stock and requires urgent attention.



Playing a part: Stanley Matthews and Tom Finney

£5m grant kickstarts national soccer tribute

THE FOOTBALL MUSEUM

A NEW national football museum, housing memorabilia dating back to the 16th century, received £5.6 million towards its total cost of £7 million.

The museum will be housed at the ground of Preston North End, one of the 12 founder members of the Football League, and will aim to work with all clubs to stage permanent and special exhibi-

tions. A hoard of memorabilia which is currently owned by FIFA, including items which belonged to legends of the game such as Sir Stanley Matthews, Tom Finney and Sir Bobby Charlton, will form the core of the collection.

"We eventually want to become a world class museum," said Bryan Gray, chairman of Preston North End and one of the museum's trustees.

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Ministry rejects Bett's proposals for performance-related pay and radical streamlining of ranks

MoD plans a better deal to keep young soldiers

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A NEW pay and career structure for the three Armed Forces, including a fairer deal for single servicemen and women, was announced by the Ministry of Defence yesterday.

A blueprint for the next 25 years was detailed in a report, *The Armed Forces of the Future: a Personnel Strategy*, which promised improved allowances to compensate for increased family separation caused by the rise in operational tours since the end of the Cold War.

Unmarried personnel will benefit from the same allowances as married counterparts. Separation allowances were supposed to compensate married people for being away from home but, under the new scheme, the idea is to pay extra to anyone, married or single, who is detached from base.

MoD sources said the new allowance system was aimed at providing extra financial incentive for young recruits to stay in the services after their initial three-year term.

The document took two

years to compile and was the MoD's response to a report delivered in March 1995 after an independent review of the Armed Forces' manpower, career and remuneration structures, headed by Sir Michael Bett, a former deputy chairman of British Telecom.

Sir Michael proposed a much more radical approach, recommending performance-related pay and a streamlined rank structure, more in keeping with private-sector management, which would have eliminated many senior ranks. The ministry has rejected performance-related pay as impractical and decided to only tinker with the rank structure, aware that ranks, like the Army's regimental system, are sacred cows.

None of the Army's officer ranks are to be touched, except for the abolition of the five-star appointment of field marshal for the top military post of chief of the defence staff. The equivalent rank in the other two services, admiral of the fleet and marshal of the Royal Air Force, have also been



Guthrie: to be first four-star services chief

abolished. This had already been announced and the next chief of the defence staff, General Sir Charles Guthrie, will remain a four-star general when he takes over in April, although at a higher salary.

In the Royal Navy, minor changes will include merging ordinary seaman and able seaman. In the RAF, acting pilot officer and pilot officer

will be abolished. MoD sources insisted that while radical recommendations, out of 151 made by Sir Michael, had been rejected, the ministry had taken on board his proposals for a new culture in pay and promotion.

One of the most sensitive issues in the Bett review covered allowances, which involve everything from boarding school payments to moving house. The MoD has decided to keep all the allowances but to reorganise them so they are simpler to administer and fairer to all.

There is to be a longer Separated Service Allowance for those sent overseas, single and married, paid once an individual has served three years. This will increase the longer the separation and will also be paid to soldiers serving in Northern Ireland. The resident battalions in Ulster will get a special supplement.

For those based in the United Kingdom who are training or on a job away from home, there is to be a tax-free monthly "get you home" allowance. Sir Michael recommended that free rail warrants



The MoD will not take up recommendations to abolish extra payments for activities such as parachuting

be scrapped for everyone over 18 but the ministry decided that would be unpopular with the more junior ranks and they will remain for everyone in their first three years.

Boarding school allowances will remain, as recommended by Sir Michael, but will be simplified to ensure it benefits only personnel who are genuinely required to serve over-

seas. Although job evaluation already exists at some levels, this is to be introduced across the board, with extra being paid to those with better qualifications and greater experience.

Although the introduction of pay ranges will allow greater flexibility within the different rank levels, the MoD has rejected Sir Michael's recom-

mendation to abolish the existing additional payments given to specialists. There is a range of extra pay awarded to those involved in areas such as parachuting, special forces, flying, diving, submarines, Gurkha language. Sir Michael wanted these to be absorbed into normal salary. The new pay system will not be implemented until 2000

because the MoD will have to buy computers to cope with the different way of assessing pay. The intention is to set up an Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency to handle the new scheme. MoD sources said the changes would not cost more, nor would they make any obvious savings, except possibly in the long term.

Army thins home ranks to boost rapid strike force

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE Army is to boost the size of the Parachute Regiment to improve the capability of 5 Airborne Brigade, one of Britain's principal rapid deployment forces for overseas operations.

At the same time, infantry battalions involved in the defence of the United Kingdom are to be reduced in size, reflecting a revised military doctrine that places more emphasis on British interests abroad than home defence.

Changes to the Army's state of readiness, announced yesterday by Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, are expected to cost up to £15 million a year. The aim is to recruit an additional 60 soldiers for each of the two parachute battalions, which will increase their strength to 710 per battalion.

The Parachute Regiment's 5 Airborne Brigade, which existed on only an ad hoc basis in the past, will from April 1 have its own dedicated manpower of 40 soldiers and equipment.

Mr Portillo said the balance of investment in the Army would shift towards the units required to be at higher operational readiness for overseas

missions. Two of the three regiments equipped with the multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS), proven in the Gulf War but undermanned, are also to be given an extra 100 soldiers each to ensure they are fully ready to deploy without reinforcements.

The 12 national defence battalions based in the United Kingdom will each lose 20 posts, bringing battalion establishment levels down to 605. The battalions are already undermanned because of the Army-wide shortfall of 5,000 recruits. There will be no reductions in Northern Ireland resident battalions.

Other measures are being taken to reduce the readiness status of different units. The overall establishment of the Army will thus be reduced by about 600 soldiers. The changes will come into effect in 2000 to allow for a recruiting drive by the Parachute Regiment.

The Territorial Army's current strength of 57,000 soldiers will be reduced to 54,000, although the establishment figure — the level that would be needed in wartime — will remain at 59,000.

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FROM RICHARD OWEN IN IMÓLA

Lawyers representing Mr Williams and Patrick Head, his technical director, said that if the judge threw out the charges against Mr Newey the whole case against both the Williams team and Imola track directors could crumble.

He had been questioned in September 1994, "but only as a witness, which is proof he was not being accused of anything". The year 1995 passed "serenely", until in May 1996 Mr Newey was "placed under suspicion".

None of the Williams team attended yesterday's hearing. Mr Goodman said Mr Williams "might appear" at a later hearing next month when Signor Passarini presents his case. Damon Hill, the reigning champion, was among 44 witnesses named yesterday.

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, accompanied by Metropolitan Kirill, admires a decorative ceiling at the residence of Patriarch Aleksii II of Moscow and All Russia, whom she met yesterday during her visit to Moscow.

FROM CHARLES BRENNER
IN BRUSSELS

The vote of censure, which was backed by 118 of the 626 members, had been called by a minority of groups of the Left and Right to punish the Commission for its alleged failure to tackle the "mad cow" disease since its outbreak in Britain in the mid-1980s.

There had been no prospect that the required majority would back yesterday's censure, but the support of more than one in six MEPs for such

Many argued that the real "culprit" in the BSE crisis was the British Government, which was condemned in harsh terms in Wednesday's vote.



FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A brilliant, revolutionary thinker, de Beauvoir's near-mythical reputation in France has recently suffered from revelations about her sometimes hard-hearted approach to those who came under her spell. However, the letters to Algren suggest a quite different aspect to her character.

The love affair came to a stormy end in 1965, when de Beauvoir evoked their relationship in her memoirs, *Force of Circumstance*, to Algren's fury. He died in 1981 after threatening to publish her letters to him.



De Beauvoir: letters of "obedient Arab wife"

**FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON**

Threatening to boycott a WTO panel set up in Geneva yesterday to settle the trade row, a senior US official said his Government would resolve its differences with the European Union through diplomatic channels.

Stuart Eizenstat, the Undersecretary of Commerce, said there had been "good progress" in talks with Sir Leon Brittan, the EU Trade Commissioner. If no agreement was reached, however, he said the WTO's director-general would be advised of America's refusal to be present at any adjudication.

"We will make it clear that the panel established today has no competence to proceed because this is a matter of US national security and foreign policy," said Mr. Eisenstat.

"The WTO is not an appropriate forum for resolving differences over what is essentially a disagreement over foreign policy."

Under the terms of the Helms-Burton law, signed by President Clinton last March, US sanctions against Fidel Castro's regime preclude investment by foreign companies in Cuba.

Mr Clinton has so far employed a six-month waiver to delay the most controversial element of the legislation, allowing any American whose property was confiscated after the Cuban revolution in 1959 to sue foreign corporations using their asset.

The EU, which had asked for intervention by the WTO, says the legislation defies accepted international law by trying to impose policies beyond America.



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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21 1997

Mixed portents glimpsed for life after Deng

Just before a Chinese emperor died, strange animals were said to appear and freak rains to fall.

Soon after Chairman Mao's death in 1976 one of the worst earthquakes in China's modern times wrecked the city of Tangshan, and since none of Mao's Gang of Four rushed to the devastated city it appeared to many Chinese that they were ignoring an omen.

Two weeks ago, when a British tourist was crushed to death by a runaway boat in Hong Kong's annual Chinese New Year parade, a Communist official in Beijing's de facto embassy here promptly issued a statement that, unfortunately though the event was, it was not a bad omen for the handover.

The death-watch over Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader, was so protracted that the most recent auguries — senior officials returning to Beijing and the closing of his private office — were discounted because there had been so many already.

Now that Mr Deng has died, new auguries are being sought, not of turtles with three heads and three-legged sheep, but of political and social upheaval. For China-watchers, wrenched from their sleep on the night of Mr Deng's death by anxious editors, the question was rarely "What kind of a man was Deng?"

What everyone wanted to know, and this question says much about the continuities in Mao's and Mr Deng's China, was: "How bad is it going to be?" Will there be a leadership struggle and will it be bloody? Will China fall apart; will that be bloody? How about the army; will it remain loyal? Will the Tibetans, Muslims, and other ethnic minorities revolt? Are students going to take to the streets?

On the international scene, can we expect a return to xenophobia, militant national-



Mao: huge earthquake followed his death

Jonathan Mirsky, East Asia Editor, reports that Deng Xiaoping's death has prompted feverish questioning, but little interest in the man

ism and, to all foreign critics of China, the ever-louder response: "You are interfering, and hurting the feelings of the Chinese people."

What will Mr Deng's death mean for the handover of Hong Kong? Will Beijing increase its already significant pressure on the political and legal structure?

Among the dozens of interviews and many obituaries, how many described Deng the Man — his habits, hobbies, and quaint little ways, apart from the old chestnuts that he loved bridge, football, ping-pong and croissants?

And yet what Mr Deng is supposed to have accomplished is stabilising and enriching China and bringing it on to the international scene as a nation to be reckoned with. One cannot deny that Mr Deng liberated many Chinese from the Maoist economic straitjacket, opened the door to the West through which he admitted might fly some annoying insects, and that for most Chinese the midnight knock on the door and long trip to the gulag are nightmares of the past.

Then why the dark questions, to which only a few have dared reply that everything is going to be all right, because President Jiang Zemin — the man designated as "the core" by Mr Deng weeks after the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests — is already in place and the system is secure.

The reason for the dark questions, and the usually cautious if not gloomy answers, is that the political system remains as Mao made it, but with looser edges. The party controls. Mr Deng was no pragmatist on this truly core matter. He had gone into what would become the party's apparatus as a teenage revolutionary in Paris, he was tempered in the party's fires, survived several purges, endured one of his wives running off with a more senior leader and a son crippled for life during the Cultural Revolution. He actively engaged in tempering, too, acting as Mao's right hand during the violent and intellectual drives of the late Fifties.

When Mr Deng returned to supreme power, two or three years after Mao's death and while he was evolving his economic reforms, he continued to target political and intellectual deviants, ensuring

that the state he had helped to make would not pass into the hands of others. He disposed of two disciples, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, both party general secretaries, because they were soft on dissidents. No system for orderly succession was established, and Mr Deng's modest refusal of the greatest offices of state and his retirement masked a drive to retain control.

This surfaced bloodily at the time of the Tiananmen Square protests nearly eight years ago when he said that, without the old Maoists, China might have slipped into "counter-revolution".

Similarly, a heavy hand was employed against fractious border regions: Tibet, Xinjiang and, wherever possible, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the 1982-1984 negotiations over the colony, Mr Deng secured most of what he wanted Margaret Thatcher to agree before they even began talks.

Had he been alert and well, he would have encouraged the establishment of the present Beijing-appointed parallel Hong Kong government six months before the official takeover; nor would he have opposed the show of missiles into the Taiwan Strait last year when Taipei began organising real elections. Nor would he have objected to the sale of weapons of mass destruction to rogue nations.

Mr Deng enabled the creation of a China in which human rights are narrowly defined, where there is a diversity of Western-style fashions in dress, entertainment, and manufacture but in which genuine intellectual endeavour, experiment, and argument remain suspect and subject to close surveillance.

Beijing wonders angrily why its subjects receive no Nobel prizes, although Chinese living abroad are laureates. What makes a civilisation and a culture meaningful and occasionally great in the modern world is not uncontrolled economic progress but essentially uninhibited creativity and intellectual curiosity. Many of China's best artists and thinkers are stunted, under house arrest, or live abroad. Disney World is no substitute for All Souls. China awaits its Order of Merit for the poet or novelist who says "Two cheers for communism".



Chris Patten, Hong Kong's Governor, arrives yesterday at Xinhua News Agency, China's de facto embassy in the colony, to pay his respects to Mr Deng's memory

Beijing to retain Hong Kong's top civil servants

By Jonathan Mirsky

HONG KONG'S Chief Executive-designate, Tung Chee-hwa, returned yesterday from Beijing and announced that China had approved his recommendation that the entire senior Civil Service pass into the new government on July 1.

It had been feared that Donald Tsang, the Financial Secretary and number two in the service, might be removed for having given China a warning not to emasculate Hong Kong's Bill of Rights.

Mr Tung praised his officials as "highly capable officers who are fully committed to Hong Kong". He made no mention, as he had in the past, of the need for prospective officials to "love China and love Hong Kong".

There will be three women in particularly sensitive positions in the next hierarchy: Anson Chan, the Chief Secretary; Elsie Leung, the Justice Secretary, the new title for Attorney-General; and Lily Yam, head of the Commission Against Corruption.

Retaining top civil servants after July 1 is one of the most reassuring signs that Mr Tung could give Hong Kong about continuity after Mr Deng's death.

Looking solemn and wearing a dark suit and black tie, Mr Tung spoke of the loss of what he referred to as *ao xiansheng* or "the old gentleman". Mr Deng, he said, had made enormous contributions to the prosperity of his people and his rubric "One China,

Two Systems" would also guarantee stability and prosperity in Hong Kong.

Mr Tung said he had been awakened early yesterday to be told of Mr Deng's death and was invited to join the 450-member funeral committee. He will attend Mr Deng's funeral next Tuesday.

Martin Lee, chairman of the Democrats, the Hong Kong electorate's favoured party scorned by Beijing, said that Mr Deng's death might enable the Chinese leadership to "not implement their recent decisions, which are very unpopular with the people of Hong Kong". These include attacks on the Bill of Rights and the establishment of the appointed Provisional Legislative Council.

Mr Lee, who has been condemned by Mr Tung for criticising Hong Kong on a European tour during which he has attacked Beijing's encroachment on the legal system, said: "If the Chinese leadership feels insecure about their position, they may adopt an even harder line. But I hope they will do something positive for Hong Kong before it's too late."

In an article published here yesterday, Mr Lee said that Mr Deng had "opened a genie's bottle of freedom that whoever succeeds him will find difficult to plug."

To the surprise of brokers, Hong Kong stocks rose, although markets fell in China and Taiwan.

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Veteran Democrat presses for inquiry into poll donations

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

DANIEL MOYNIHAN, the veteran Democrat senator and keeper of his party's conscience, turned against President Clinton yesterday and demanded an immediate investigation of illegal campaign funds.

The call for Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, to appoint an independent counsel to investigate alleged fundraising abuses came as the White House faced new questions over a Latin American connection linked to Asian donations.

Mr Moynihan, who was also the first Democratic senator to have urged the appointment of a special Whitewater counsel in 1994, said the suggestion of foreign involvement in American policy needed to be resolved.

The Justice Department has so far resisted Republican pressure to nominate such a prosecutor to examine foreign contributions alleged to have

poured into Democratic coffers during Mr Clinton's re-election campaign. Under federal election law, it is an offence for foreign citizens to contribute to either an American party or individual.

Although Mr Moynihan said the inquiry should look into Republican donations, he conceded that Democratic abuses last year appeared to be without precedent. "It's the foreign involvement," he said. "An independent counsel is needed now."

Referring to a White House meeting last year attended by a Chinese weapons dealer, he said it was ridiculous to claim that "everyone has Chinese arms merchants to lunch, don't you?"

Although the departure of Kenneth Starr from the Whitewater investigation has done little to enhance the stature of special prosecutors in the United States, Mr Moynihan's words are certain

to resonate with liberal Democrats and place greater pressure on Ms Reno to respond.

It emerged yesterday that an Asian businessman from Miami, Mark Jimenez, twice met the National Security Council's top Latin American specialist last April to ask for Mr Clinton's support in averting a military coup in Paraguay. Mr Clinton later telephoned Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the Paraguayan President, and allowed him to stay in the US Embassy until he could safely return to the palace in Asunción.

The Wall Street Journal said that Señor Jimenez, on the second occasion accompanied by Paraguay's Ambassador to the United States, paid \$100,000 (\$62,500) to the Democratic National Committee on the day an unsuccessful coup attempt began. The White House denied the visits had any bearing on the decision to back Señor Wasmosy.

LEARN, TEACH AND SERVE THE NATION



President Mandela sits with his female companion, Graca Machel, left, at a function in Soweto yesterday, apparently oblivious of his former wife, Winnie, right. It was the first time all three had been seen at the same public function. But if there was any discomfort, all hid it well. Mr Mandela and Mrs Machel

Mandela's loves share podium

widow of Samora Machel, the Mozambican leader, laughed and whispered at times on the podium for a ceremony launching Mr Mandela's "culture of learning" campaign to promote education in South Africa.

(Our Foreign Staff writes) Winnie Madikizela-Mandela arrived late and walked to an open seat. She and Mr Mandela did not speak and hardly looked in each other's direction. She and Mrs Machel also had

no contact. F.W. de Klerk, the former President, meanwhile announced a shake-up of his National Party. Roelf Meyer, the former Secretary-General, was appointed to head a team comprising two blacks, two whites and a Coloured to prepare a challenge to the ANC at the next election.

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US drugs war is left in disarray

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA'S war on drugs along its southern border was in disarray yesterday after the arrest of Mexico's senior anti-drug official on charges of taking bribes from his country's biggest cocaine cartel.

Washington officials were last night assessing the damage allegedly caused by General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, who was privy to secret information about American anti-narcotics operations.

The assessments were similar to those made in espionage cases after a "mole" has been unearthed. Of particular concern was the fate of drug informants working for the Americans who may have been compromised. It was assumed that the Mexico drug-fighting operations had all been blown.

Washington indefinitely delayed today's scheduled publication of a joint US-Mexico white paper analysing the threat of drug trafficking. President Clinton has to decide by Thursday whether to certify Mexico as a trustworthy partner in anti-narcotics operations.

Mr Clinton said yesterday that the general's alleged corruption was "deeply troubling", but the prompt way it had been dealt with by Mexico was encouraging.

Wives club 'smuggled in heroin'

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A GROUP of God-fearing, fragrantly perfumed New York housewives allegedly carried large quantities of cocaine and heroin across American and European borders.

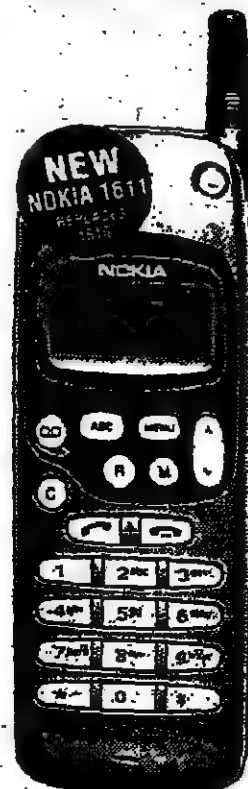
American federal investigators charged five women with drug-running and suspect that a further ten may have taken part in a suspected smuggling triangle. They allegedly flew from the United States to South America, to pick up cocaine, delivered it to Europe and picked up heroin for the return trip.

According to agents of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the women, who were allegedly paid \$10,000 (£6,200) per round trip, took advantage of their innocent looks to swan through Customs. If the DEA is to be believed, they were highly paid drug "mules".

Typical of the suspects was Lavonda Gore, 24, a part-time legal clerk whose Long Island neighbours described her as a churchgoing mother of three. All five women already arrested met at a Long Island social club.

Investigators believe that the alleged drug ring was started by former US Navy sailors who set up the operation six years ago in Italy.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21 1997

Australian leader learns he has convict ancestor

FROM ROGER MAYNARD
IN SYDNEY

IT IS the sort of ancestral record that Paul Keating, the former Australian Prime Minister, would almost have killed for — a forebear who was shipped out from Britain on a minor theft charge.

But sadly for the ex-Labor Party leader, who was never able to boast a convict ancestry to bolster his republican sentiments, his successor, John Howard, almost certainly can.

Surprisingly for a man of sound conservative stock, Mr Howard, it appears, has something of a skeleton in his cupboard. Records unearthed by the Church of Latter-Day Saints, the Mormons, show that his maternal great-grandfather, Thomas — alias William — Barker, was shipped here on a prison ship in 1835 on a charge of thievery.

Barker, a shoemaker's boy, was 14 when convicted for "robbing a dwelling house of clothes". Although he was lame and had no prior conviction, he was sentenced at London's Old Bailey to both transportation and a seven-year penal term.

Genealogists find profit in fad for criminal descent

By MARK HENDERSON

AS AUSTRALIA has come to terms with its partly criminal ancestry, tracing a family tree has become an increasingly popular pastime.

"Dead persons societies", devoted to finding ancestors, attract hundreds of members in all the major towns, and there is a burgeoning market for family research as fashion-conscious Aussies try to unearth a thieving great grandparent.

More than 50 genealogists work full time, charging a minimum fee of A\$25 (£12) an hour for the most cursory of searches. The best, such as Janet Reakes, director of the Australian Immigration and Family History Centre in Hervey Bay, Queensland, can become very rich.

Lists of many of the 160,000 convicts who arrived at Australia's penal colonies between 1788 and 1868 are published on the Internet in the Australian Family History Compendium, and some of their family details are also available — at a price. If you want to find out whether the Mr Harris of Chelsea who was transported to Victoria in 1860 was Roll's great-grandfather, or whether the Mr Foster convicted in Kent in 1800 is an ancestor of the famous brewing family, you will have to pay at least A\$40 to find out.

As for Mark Taylor, the Australian cricket captain, the

search could prove very expensive indeed, as three Taylors are listed as arriving on the same boat in 1848.

To encourage would-be researchers to part with their cash, the genealogists have published potted histories of some of their more colourful pieces of research. The Cogrove family, for example, was descended from a soldier posted to Wollongong, New South Wales, and the daughter of a transported convict, and produced a clan of touring actors and impresarios in the 19th century and a war hero who was killed fighting the Japanese in 1943.

Graham Jaunay, a professional genealogist from Adelaide, said tracing a convict ancestor had only recently become fashionable.

"In the century following the discontinuation of transportation, ex-convicts and their families went to considerable lengths to hide their past," he said. "There were many cases where even close family members were unaware of their relatives' past, and there are still families who refuse to believe they are descended from convicts."

John Howard, the Prime Minister, is far from being the only man of alleged convict stock to do well for himself, according to Mr Jaunay. "Many convicts rose to prominent positions," he said.



Howard: surprise news of a convict forebear



Keating: cannot claim a "fashionable" past

ancestry these days. Anthea Hislop, a lecturer at the Australian National University, said: "There is a certain cachet among history students about having a convict forebear."

It was very different in the last century when families would do all in their power to hide their convict past, known as the "stain". Britain introduced transportation to Australia to ease the pressure on its overcrowded prisons in the

18th and early 19th centuries. The 1776 Revolution prevented the American colonies from being used as a dumping ground. Twelve years later, when the First Fleet arrived in Australia, a penal colony was founded in Sydney. The first convicts — 757 adults and 13 children — sailed into Botany Bay in January 1788.

Eighty years later, on January 10, 1868, the last British convicts disembarked in Fremantle, Western Australia. More than 150,000 people had been shipped "down under", although they were not described as convicts but "government men". They paid their debt by working for the Government as builders and labourers. Lucky ones were given a conditional pardon, which meant they were free men on condition they did not return to their homeland.

Now, 162 years after Thomas Barker arrived in Australia, his great-great-grandchild is also a government man — the Prime Minister.

Leading article, page 19



A sketch of convicts in Tasmania during the 1830s being forced to walk for 30 miles a day carrying 56lb weights

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'They see Radio 4 as their club - they do not want changes'

Nick Ross on leaving his phone-in after ten years as the voice of reason and social conscience at the BBC

I will be *Hamlet* without the prince, but after ten years, *Call Nick Ross* is to lose Nick Ross, the nice, slight young man with the voice of reason and the pale eyelashes and the face - though 50 this year - unravaged by time.

It was a particularly good CNR (as he calls it) on Tuesday, on the *Daily Mail's* "Murderers" front page. Abetted by Geoffrey Robertson, QC, Ross challenged listeners as usual: Was this a proper way to deal with justice? Did we want the press to take over where courts have failed? Had we been involved, or scandalised? Call him. You might have expected Radio 4 listeners to chorus applause for the *Mail* - but unpredictability is the keynote of CNR. Linda Bellos rang in ("The *Mail*, of all papers, with its contemptible record of whipping up racism") and so did a

lawyer acting for one of the five defendants. Ross raised the Colin Stagg case, the videotape kept from the jury. Police officers rang to say how commonplace is the wall of silence, when people are afraid to come forward. Two lawyers said what happens in court is a game: who puts on the best show wins. Sound, authoritative stuff. No borer.

When they first offered *Tuesday Call* (as it then was) Ross hesitated. "I always hated phone-ins that invited ill-informed bigotry from the loudest mouths. I was determined to know enough to make sure we didn't just peddle garbage and reinforce prejudice." Prisoners ring from prison; Cabinet ministers are confronted by people who know more than they do, and can speak touchingly and compellingly from direct personal experience.

The most memorable for

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



him was "a surreal conversation, mesmerising and chilling" after Hungerford, with a caller who said he understood Michael Ryan's state of mind: he, too, was a potential Ryan, armed with a crossbow. Ross rang him afterwards and got his permission first before alerting the police. The most

memorable for me was Sandra Sullivan in 1994, whose daughter had been murdered by an inmate while doing volunteer work in a care home. Mrs Sullivan totally silenced Ross with her impassioned plea for justice for victims. He rang her afterwards, too, and urged her on with her campaign. "What you said has needed saying for 300 years. Don't take the pressure off." Clearly he does not switch off with the phone line. He remains involved.

Ross's social conscience was inbred: both his parents were marriage guidance counsellors, so the three children were told sad tales of children in unhappy families. Both parents got into local LibDem politics. "They had the kind of burning social conscience that does not necessarily pull the levers of power but says: 'We must see if there is anything we can do to help.'" His

mother was appointed OBE last year for setting up a youth counselling service in Surrey. His Berlin-born paternal grandfather, Felix Rosen, came to England in the 1920s as the representative of Zionism. "He was a signatory to Israel's declaration of independence, and Liberal Minister of Justice, who would roll in his grave at what has become of Israel now."

Father was a personnel director for Mullards, the electrical components people, so they were the first family in the neighbourhood to have a television: in 1953 the entire population of Woodcote Road, congregated *chez* Ross for the Coronation.

Ross says he sank without trace at school - he won no prizes, as he told them when he went back to give the prizes at speech day. It was Wallington County Grammar - the same school, same years, as Chris Woodhead, now HM Chief Inspector of Schools. "We must have been very unimpressive, because neither of us even noticed the other," he says - a fact unmentioned when Woodhead came on his phone-in.

The fact that he is educating his three young sons in the private sector gives him a guilty pang. "It's like the day I first cut through an Outspan orange - the lingering sense that you shouldn't be doing this doesn't go away." With candour, he says: "I am angry that I believe my children will do better at a private school."

Going to Queen's University, Belfast, in 1966 - Bernard Devlin was in the year above him, also reading psychology - was "more important in forming what I am: than school, marriage, or childhood. When the Troubles began, the English sided immediately with the Catholics, not because of nationalism but because they had no votes. If you couldn't be at Woodstock or Paris, Belfast then was a golden period. I loved it." He joined the BBC and married - quite late, at 38 - Sarah Caplin, a BBC colleague, after

catching sight of her in a Jacuzzi in Chicago in his *Man Alive* days.

He is fantastically disciplined and organised. I can report that for two weeks his diary contains no gaps, from breakfast meetings, to school concerts, to chairing conferences. His grasp of each new subject demands assiduous prep. When I phoned him after his Westminster programme had finished, he had yet to write a policy paper, followed by a dinner. He firmly refused a second glass of wine. "Let's just chunter on." Is he a bit of a control freak? "I rather admire control freaks," he said.

He has not (as misreported) been fired for his lucrative sideline in corporate videos, nor is he leaving in a huff because *Election Call* with Peter Sissons is taking over his slot. He is leaving because he wants to go on a high, says the official BBC statement today, adding that the Controller, James "McBirt" Boyle, hopes he will soon be back.

There is, sighs Ross, one huge regret about leaving: the great privilege of broadcasting to the Radio 4 audience. At times I can understand why, for the Controller, they are such an irritating bunch: they see Radio 4 as their club, and they don't change, or to let other people in."

He has been gratifyingly immune with offers of other jobs. Fronting *Crimewatch UK* - which he will carry on with - has led him inevitably into crime prevention, where so much could be done. His *Who's Who* entry used to list under recreations, after skiing and scuba-diving, "observing (and occasionally influencing) issues of public policy". He has excused that bit now; but he has become a patron of committees on healthcare, gene therapy, road safety, youth and crime. "When I started broadcasting I kept thinking that when I grew up I'd get a proper job, and never have." But he could obviously now make use of his experience on crime prevention.

"Home Secretaries don't

have any balls and are clueless about crime," he said in 1993. He thinks we have to get real, stop locking the stable door after the horse has bolted. Stop demonising offenders. "Everybody breaks rules. It is part of growing up" - as he has said, we have all stolen sweets from Woolworths, including him.

The key issue is to contain it at that stage, instead of making it easier and easier to commit crime.

"I once went to China on your behalf and at your expense, as *Beyond the Fringe* put it. There was barbed wire round some houses. I was told by the head man: 'My grandfather did not know burglars. But now, we have burglars.' The reason is obvious: television sets in every home. Crime is a product of affluence."

"Crimes evolve, and become extinct. You don't get much horse stealing or safebreaking now. But we offer the temptation of portable, stealable goods, easily replicable in our households as our own."

A few years ago there was a small burglary at his home in Notting Hill. The thief reached through a window and got the nanny's handbag. But what perturbed Ross was that it was in the tabloids the next day. ("TV Crime Nick is burgled") only the police could have told them. "There's an issue here about trusting the police. I

think they ought to have a policy, like the medical profession, about where privacy begins and ends."

He fulminates on the obviousness of cutting credit card crime (with photocopies on cards for instance), on the tantalising ease of mobile phone theft - "I could take your mobile now and use it" - and the foolishness of designing JCBs that anyone can get in and drive off.

There's a corporate recklessness here, in those who peddle such enormous temptations and take no precautions. There is blame on both sides." As he says, if you asked anyone who can think laterally - physicists, engineers - they would tell you how to make things less stealable, less inconspicuously portable, less valuable on resale.

Playing devil's advocate has become second nature, since every story has two sides. "We are biologically programmed to seek certainty where there is uncertainty, meaning where there is ambiguity. But life is always much messier than the story. I have to construct." Whenever he is accused of partiality, he says listeners claim he had taken the opposite side of his true beliefs. They can't call Nick Ross on 0171-580 4444 any more, but they might now begin to hear what he really thinks.

Ringin' off: Nick Ross says it has been a privilege to broadcast to the Radio 4 audience - but he can understand why, for the Controller, they are such an irritating bunch

THE SUNDAY TIMES HOCKNEY ON HOGARTH



David Hockney draws inspiration from "a superb pictorial chronicler of life and manners" THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

He does not switch off with the phone. He stays involved.

dated with offers of other jobs. Fronting *Crimewatch UK* - which he will carry on with - has led him inevitably into crime prevention, where so much could be done. His *Who's Who* entry used to list under recreations, after skiing and scuba-diving, "observing (and occasionally influencing) issues of public policy". He has excused that bit now; but he has become a patron of committees on healthcare, gene therapy, road safety, youth and crime. "When I started broadcasting I kept thinking that when I grew up I'd get a proper job, and never have." But he could obviously now make use of his experience on crime prevention.

"Home Secretaries don't

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As shoppers become more sophisticated, so supermarkets introduce new ways of luring them into stores

The pulling power of the trolley

It is sometimes said that if you want to discover the secrets of a friend you should look no further than his or her dustbin: the same applies to a supermarket trolley or basket. Part of the fascination of supermarkets is that they offer a window on other people's lives. Observing and listening to people as they shop — as Channel 4 has done for a new series — can be devastatingly revealing.

One couple, Sara Phyllis and Karl Selfe, who were filmed wandering their local supermarket in Camden Town, were astonished that a routine they considered unimportant revealed truths about themselves and their relationship they never thought possible. "I was amazed at how bossy I am and how cunning," says Sara, 30, who works at a London design consultancy. "I was clearly the dominant one. It was me who was trying to sneak things into the basket and who was telling Karl what he couldn't have."

"We unwittingly slipped into archetypal behaviour, too: I buzzed off looking for promotions, while he watched the trolley. It was as if we were working telepathically. It was very strange."

Professor Rachel Bowlby, of the research centre in the humanities at Sussex University, says supermarkets tend to magnify the roles we play at home. "But they do so in a more relaxed, parodic way. So one partner may chastise the other for spending too much in a manner that is gentle and mocking but which at home may be a cause of bitter dispute."

The behaviour of Sara and Karl followed an established pattern. "When couples shop they tend to work subconsciously as a team," Professor Bowlby adds. "The man, for instance, will guard the trolley or he will open a bag as his partner drops vegetables into it. What is significant is that couples operate without needing to speak or indeed look at each other. They automati-



The way people shop in supermarkets reveals truths about themselves and their relationships, says Jason Cowley

cally understand what their role is and what is required of them."

The modern supermarket is a spectacle of excess, an assault on the senses. The shopper is literally overwhelmed by choice: a typical store carries something like 30,000 product lines. And yet there is nothing contingent or random about a supermarket. It is a carefully planned environment: complex, demanding, even mesmerising. The soporific lighting, the drifting scent of warm bread, the sing-song of goods — everything has been market-tested, researched, preplanned.

As you move through a store, criss-crossing aisles and avoiding rival trolleys, you are influenced by layout, sound, colour and the bustle of other people. There is a complex system of signs and signifiers to be negotiated: price-promotions, in-aisle gondolas, health tips, endcaps, banners. Small wonder, then, that many shoppers suffer information overload, being reduced, says Hugh Phillips, senior lecturer in retailing at De Montfort University, to drowsily operating on autopilot.

Supermarkets are keenly interested in what happens to us at such moments because although we appear to be mesmerised we are still actually shopping.

Dr Phillips says: "If we use our maximum attention for too long we can become easily tired. So what we try to do is process information subconsciously." Each person on average blinks

about 32 times a minute; this falls to an almost narcotized 14 times per minute in supermarkets. "Our blink rate is associated with the amount of conscious attention we spend," says Dr Phillips. "The trick of shopping is to relax your eyes so that information is filtered without stress."

The grocery market is estimated to be worth £72 billion a year. There are now something like 30,000 supermarkets in Britain occupying 37 million square feet and employing 320,000 people. And they are growing in size, becoming more intimidating: there are now 1,087 superstores of more than 25,000 square feet; the figure ten years ago was 457.

As shoppers become more sophisticated, so the supermarkets introduce new ways of luring them into stores — such as loyalty cards and bonus schemes.

In addition, the large supermarkets are employing networks of market researchers, "retail" anthropologists, behavioural researchers and academics as they pursue the perfect profit-generating store. So fierce is the competition that if you have an "expert" opinion on the subject the supermarket will pay to hear it.

The trouble is, the more supermarkets spend on research the more elusive and unpredictable the shopper becomes. Gill Davies, of the market research company ACNielsen, says: "For too long

retailers have seen shoppers as a homogeneous block and used generic marketing to attract them. That was a mistake. Each consumer is different: he or she behaves in entirely their own way."

In an attempt to reflect the diversity of society — and to determine our response to certain stimuli — ACNielsen has separated shoppers into six categories:

● The habit-bound diarch: These tend to be older people for whom routine and loyalty are important. They have limited funds; they are cautious with an eye for a bargain.

● The self-indulgent shopper: They are younger professionals, with no money worries or commitments and a fondness for the exotic and unusual. They are confident, self-assured and eager to experiment with a multiplicity of foods.

● Struggling idealists: Not much respected or desired by supermarkets, they are pedantic and particular, favouring organic and "natural" ingredients. They never spend much.

● Comfortable and contented: Loosely called Middle Englanders, they are the most sought-after shopper, encompassing young comfortable mothers and housewives to middle-aged couples with disposable income. They tend to be admirers of Delia Smith and luxurious abundance, in surplus.

● The frenzied copier: Professional without much time, or mothers juggling a career and family, they spend freely but move quickly. They return to the same supermarkets, especially if they offer crèche facilities and consistent layouts.

● Mercenaries: They are fickle, transient, often impoverished. They favour own-brand goods, promotions, discounts and damaged goods — anything cheap.

"People may dismiss these categories as too simplistic," says Gill Davies, "but they are helping supermarkets drive up profits. It's also amazing how many people recognise themselves in them."

Shop Until You Drop, Thursday, 5pm, Channel 4

'Stewed rat or roast grasshopper, sir?'

What do you eat when you have nothing left to eat? Well, if you are a war correspondent dodging bullets in all the world's trouble spots, the answer appears to be grasshoppers, dandelions, rats or caterpillars. That, at least, is the outcome of research by Carlton Television, which has invited the chef Ross Burden to recreate the culinary experiences of journalists working in extremis. And what an unconventional menu he has designed.

There is a choice of starters: the stinging nettles, dandelion leaves, baked beans and spaghetti, variations of which provided sustenance for Martin Bell, the veteran BBC correspondent, and his team while living and working in Sarajevo during the war in

War correspondents are so busy dodging bullets that when it comes to food, they will eat anything

Bosnia. Or the goat and rancid blue cheese roll that ITN's Lawrence McGinty sampled in Turkey as he reported on a UNICEF vaccination campaign.

From an astonishingly odd selection of main courses there is surely nothing odder than the meals eaten by John Cookson, of Sky News, as he investigated the Peruvian drugs trade. First, "after a long tiring day", he unwittingly ate a stewed rat; at least, being tired was his excuse. Later, after being mugged at gunpoint, he sat down to rabbit in chili and chocolate sauce. Small wonder he contracted dysentery.

Pudding comes courtesy of the BBC's Simon Dring,

whose Pop-Tarts and Ambrosia rice, shared with the Beduin of Syria, was infinitely preferable to the chunk of warm human flesh he claims he was offered while travelling there as a 16-year-old.

But it is Michael Nicholson's culinary adventures in Angola that stand out.

An ITN foreign correspondent since 1966, Nicholson, 60, describes his job as one of exotic luxury punctuated by periods of extreme danger, as he discovered in Angola in the late 1970s.

He and his camera crew were being escorted by guerrillas to interview the leader of Unita, Jonas Savimbi, when they were ambushed by Cuban troops. Presumed dead, Nicholson spent 4½ months wandering the southern Angolan wilderness, known as "the place at the end of the earth". He ate whatever was offered him: baked caterpillars, roasted grasshoppers, maize gruel.

Like most war correspondents, he was used to trauma and suffering — other people's. "Nothing could prepare me for the awfulness of my diet, or of having to eat when my face was covered by a blanket of flies," Nicholson says. "It was cattle country and the sky



Nicholson: plagued by flies

would be black with flies. The cattle had all been slaughtered but the flies remained. The only way you could eat was by pulling a sleeping bag over your head, putting your food inside the bag and eating in complete darkness. Otherwise you were eating mouthfuls of flies. It really is the closest to hell I've ever been."

And yet there were meals he enjoyed. "The caterpillars, caught by their hundreds and kept in a bucket, were actually quite juicy," he says. "Most of the time we were eating a kind of semolina porridge made from maize, so

anything new was a bonus. When I was first offered the grasshoppers I thought they were castor nuts. They had been cooked over a fire and were dark brown, and crunchy. They were absolutely delicious."

Angola does not hold the happiest of memories for Nicholson. For it was where, in 1975, when independence was declared, that he ate his worst meal: roasted goat. "The Portuguese were pulling out and there wasn't much food about. Our guides had a pet goat, which we used to dose up with whisky. We grew rather fond of the creature. Then one afternoon and before our eyes its throat was cut, it was skinned and offered for us to eat. I can see why people become vegetarians: if you eat an animal you have stroked and pined it leaves a pretty unpalatable taste."

Approaching retirement, Nicholson finds himself increasingly nostalgic for his early days as a foreign correspondent. "They were pioneers: going to countries, believe it or not, where a television camera had never been before. The sense of adventure more than compensated for the occasional dire food."

JASON COWLEY

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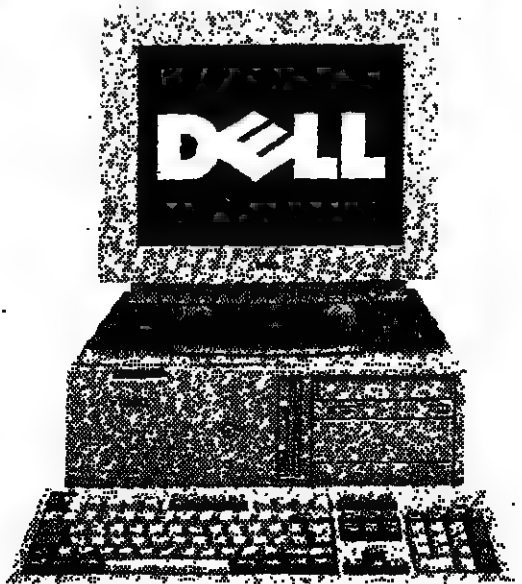
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Philip Howard



Politicians are never more harmlessly employed than when electioneering

Interregnum (spell them how you will) are not much fun in an unstable factionocracy such as China's. There the death of an Emperor is traditionally a time for warlords, opportunists and change. Not for nothing were the words for revolution in Ancient Greece and Rome "new things". To make revolution was to renovate "to do new things". Not for nothing were classic professors of the old school republican reactionaries.

But in Britain's tired old democracy, an interregnum such as the present extended general election is the best of times. Fools who grumble about the constant electioneering do not realise when they are well off. For once every five years, the professional political class has to suck up to the rest of us and stop its pathetic attempts to improve our way of life. It reorganises us with unnecessary, mischievous, wicked or counter-productive legislation. Politicians are never more harmlessly employed than when electioneering. For then they stop legislating and start courting us. For once, as one of the party factions in Reigate has shown, the people of England get their chance to speak. May Reigate select a candidate as worthy of its glibly suburb as the last one was.

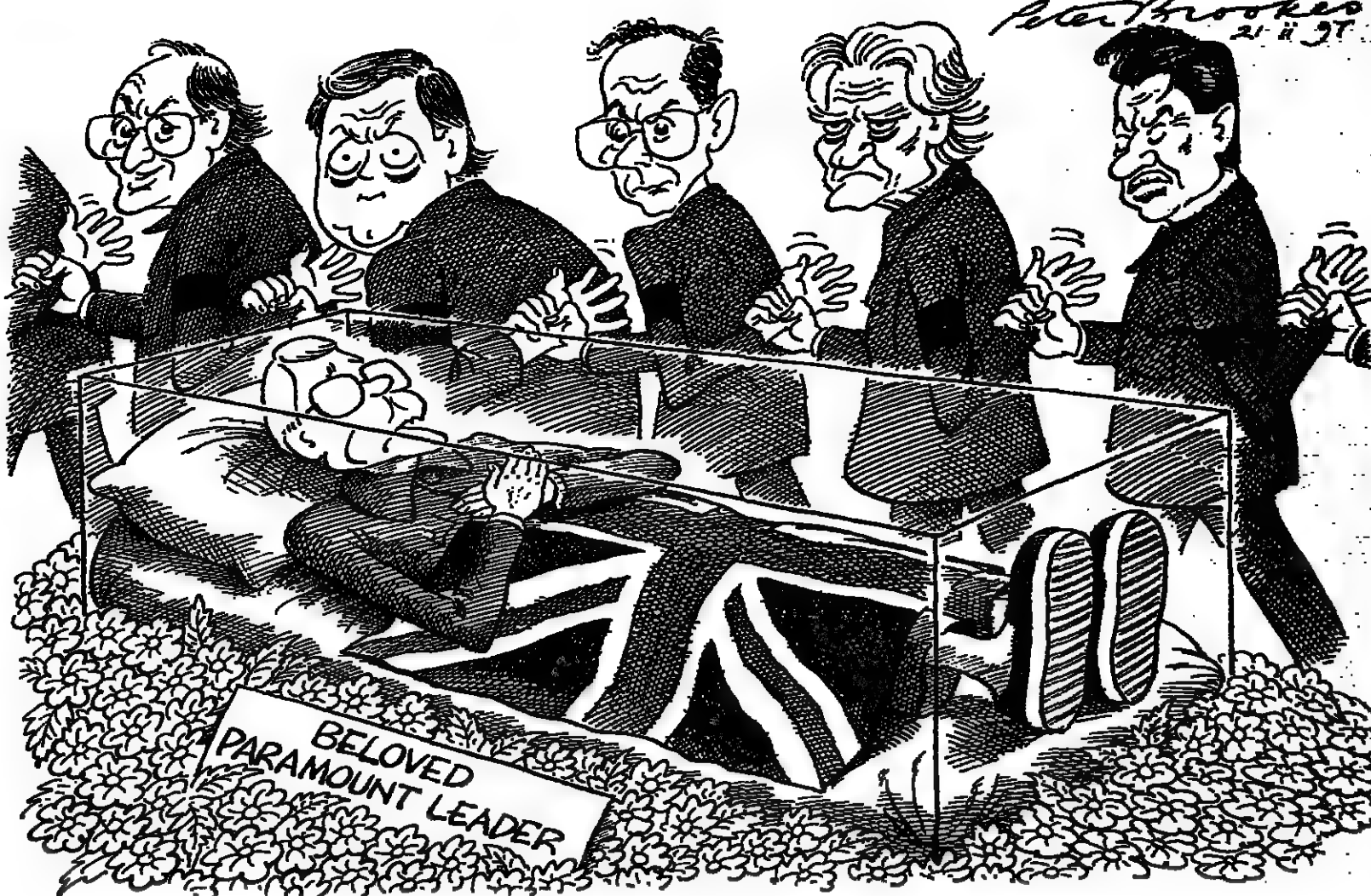
And for once the politicians have to stop taking money for questions, enjoying "gourmet" freebies to the Ritz, filling their spurious expenses and rogering their "secretaries". Of course, nothing can stop politicians dissembling, and they get up to even more of it at election time. And it is true that an election brings the inconveniences of junk leaflets, election broadcasts and knocks on the door from simple-minded or hectoring enthusiasts. But for what other emergency were the bin-liner and the television zapper invented? You do not have to answer their knocks. But it can be instructive to do so, in order to observe the brass knuckles that drive such loonies to knock on the doors of strangers with their piffing programmes and scaremongering.

For politicians at all levels, from Westminster to the election door-knockers, are workers. As well as that other word like it with a vowel changed, a worker came into the language as the disparaging American college term for a studious person. A fanciful etymology derives it from "know" spelt backwards. In England the equivalent schoolboy term for those cleverer than the speaker was swot. But Bill Clinton, with his awesome passion for electioneering and his awful lack of principle, has turned working into a compliment — at any rate among the professional political classes. Clinton's annual spring working weekend in South Carolina for wannabe politicians sounds like the fifth circle of hell for the average human being.

But for ambitious workers, who form less than 10 per cent of any population, it is heaven. And so is our general election. For the "professional" politicians can winter on their vanity's desire about the "issues" and dance a thousand policy proposals on the point of a pin. They can defile our newspapers and billboards with famous and patronising posters. But at least that brings money into the trades for proper workers.

But of course, a general election is about something more important than choosing between a grey man and a man with a permanent glassy smile. The governance of a nation matters. But in general, the less of it there is, the better. Pace market gardeners and poor put-upon prostitutes, politics is an older profession — though not as honourable as either. The oldest profession is medicine: a doctor was needed to attend the first birth. Second was the law: a registrar recorded it. An architect reduced chaos to order. But government came first, because we needed a politician to create the chaos.

So the modern doctrine (devised of course, by wonks) of permanent electioneering is a sophisticated advance for democracy. The fearful workers can chatter and pamphleteer in ever decreasing circles until they vanish up their own bum. The rest of us get on with more civilised pursuits, such as reading, listening to music, watching the daffodils return, and even wondering about the plural of interregnum. For interregnums are fun even if they are interregna. A British general election, held once a year at a fixed date, say April 1, would be the greatest public blessing since the Reform Acts. It would confine the workers to their ghetto.



PARTY POWER STRUGGLE

Elementary, Watson

The great DNA boffin is right: only the parents should ever decide whether a particular gene warrants an abortion

The headline was sensational. "Abort babies with gay genes," says Nobel winner. But that was not what Dr James Watson said. He had told his *Sunday Telegraph* interviewer that if any gene unwelcome to parents were found in an embryo, they should be permitted to abort it. And if an embryo lacked a gene which parents wanted in their child, they could abort that too.

Height. Intelligence. Down's syndrome. Musical aptitude. Good looks. Curly hair. Skin colour. Homosexuality. . . . all these characteristics may be genetically determined. With every step in the advance of medical knowledge we see more clearly where the road is leading. The era of the designed baby is dawning.

Watson, one of the men who discovered DNA, saw no reason not to welcome this, even if some "gay embryos" were aborted as a result. He does not assume that homosexuality is genetically determined: the "gay gene" is only one instance of the dilemmas which will occur. The debate is more important than the instance.

Reaction to Dr Watson's remarks has been swift and censorious. Nick Partridge, the director of the Terence Higgins Trust (an AIDS and HIV charity) called Watson's remarks "outrageous". The *Sunday Telegraph's* Editor, Dominic Lawson, said Watson had become "too big for his DNA". And reaction from anti-abortion campaigners has been predictably hostile.

More significant has been the view of what we might call the *Guardian*-reading tendency. This, too, seems to be hostile. The paper's columnist, George Monbiot, wrote on Tuesday that all the evils of "mass consumerism" would flow from permitting parents to choose the offspring they want. The accretion of individual choices could lead to the emergence of an unlovely society. Trying to confer advantage on our children by designing the embryo was comparable with sending them to a public school. He condemned both.

Here, then, is a proposal that unites progressives and conservatives in condemnation. There must be something to be said for it.

Leave aside the debate about whether abortion can ever be right. It matters, but it is another debate. We will not outlaw abortion, and the only window anti-abortionists have into the argument about genes is to cite Dr

Watson's proposals as proof that once you permit abortion for any reason other than life-and-death emergency, the slope is slippery. Indeed it is. But we are on the slope, and not disposed as a nation to clamber back up it. The question is whether we can find an anchor here — some distance down the slope — or whether, with Dr Watson, we slide.

In this, as in a wide range of ethical questions of public policy in Britain, one starts by discovering that Baroness Warnock has been asked to consider the question: that she has considered it; and that she has coped out of offering any useful, or even interesting, answers. Mary Warnock led the Inquiry into Human Fertilisation, whose 1984 report (though focused upon *in vitro* fertilisation) looked at the wider question of the status of human embryos. It concluded:

Public anxiety . . . centres . . . on the idea of the deliberate creation of human beings with specific characteristics. We regard such techniques as purely speculative, but believe that any developments in these fields are precluded by the controls we have already recommended. . . . We recommend that the proposed licensing body promulgate guidance on what types of research, apart from those precluded by law, would be unlikely to be considered ethically acceptable in any circumstances, and therefore would not be licensed.

In other words, "Don't ask me." Thanks, Mary. In the book she wrote after this report, *A Question of Life*, she enlightens us further: . . . some people, at some times, may regard things as matters of moral right or wrong which at another time, or another place, are thought to be matters of taste, or, indeed, matters of no importance at all. . . . Those who discuss moral decision in terms of what is, or is not, compatible with the dictates of conscience are, at least in part, appealing to an inner sense of what is, or is not, tolerable behaviour.

David Hume compressed this into something more lucid. In 1738: morality, he wrote, was "more properly felt than judg'd of". And in the end, that is all she can advise.

But every age needs a Warnock. The function of a Warnock is to provide for administrators the high-toned mush of academic pedigree upon which they can float the provocations which may detain, but cannot arrest, the march of history. We should not mock. By erecting straw barriers instead of concrete ones, a Warnock saves her age from collisions of a more damaging kind. One sometimes suspects that if Baroness Warnock had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent her. One sometimes suspects we have.

That 1984 report did offer a guess at public moral sentiment. It guessed that "Society feels . . . its members . . . must be protected against possible exploitation by enthusiastic scientists". Upon that guess, Warnock tried half-heartedly to preclude development of knowledge of the designing of babies.

But the guess was wrong-headed. Of course, if you ask "Society" (should you ever meet such a being) "do you think your members should be protected against exploitation by enthusiastic scientists?" Society would say Yes. But I believe, with another baroness, that there is no such thing as society: there are parents. If you ask parents "If there were a way you could ensure that your baby will grow up to be bright, strong and handsome, would you consider taking it?", then many would take it. This is not a matter of exploitation by scientists: parents, of their own volition, will exploit the possibilities offered by science.

And why not? Human beings have always tried to improve their offspring.

Not only (or even, mainly) by persuasion, but by coercion do we mould. A million braces, callipers, foot-blinders, sticking-out-ear-flatteners, public school house-masters. A-level crammers, slippers and canes all bear witness to this.

Until recently, natural selection — the survival of the fittest — offered a silent hand in the process. Now a welfareism under which the worst reproduce as fast as the best has blocked human evolution. The acquiring of mastery over the genes we transmit, far from being anti-natural, allows natural selection to resume its course.

It is simply famous for a man who is tall, or crippled, or pale, or short, or gay to try to prevent access to such scientific mastery on the ground that if it had existed previously, he might not have been born. So what? If you don't exist you haven't missed anything. It might be possible to find a gene which disposes a man to be sexually attracted to trees. An infinity of possible sexualities is, in Nick Partridge's sense, missing out by not being born, but Dr Watson's proposals imply no reduction in the number of human lives: for every embryo rejected in favour of a preferred embryo, a child who would not otherwise have been conceived is made. Why not let the parents choose which?

If my parents had not wanted a gay son, and if medical science in 1949 could have identified that propensity in the embryo, then no power on earth should have prohibited them from terminating me. Their decision would have been wrong, but they should have been free to take it. Those authoritarians — progressive and conservative — who would deny the next generation such mastery would do so because they do not trust their fellow men to make the right choices. In denying individual parents control, they assert their own. They know best; they know that Asian parents ought not to prefer a male child, that *Daily Mail*-reading parents ought not to prefer a heterosexual son.

We may agree, but why should we interfere? Let people find the truth by experimentation: let a shortage of Asian girls create its own demand. It may create a surplus of Asian homosexuals. Let gay men prove our worth, as we do. Through trial and error people will find their way, and, in the end, nothing will stop the march of knowledge. With knowledge marches capability. Nothing can separate them.

Just how green is Gummer?

Tessa Blackstone on the gap between rhetoric and action

John Gummer, the man in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture during the genesis of the BSE crisis, has carefully cultivated a "green" reputation. He uses impassioned language to argue that we must not "cheat on our children". He has been on our television warning developers that they will no longer be allowed to build on greenfield sites. And he has been to international conferences denouncing countries that refuse to face up to global warming.

But how green, really, is the Secretary of State for the Environment? I believe he deserves some credit. It seems that he has been convinced by the evidence of environmental decline his advisers place before him, on urban air pollution, the steady loss of rural England and on global warming in particular. He has been successful with the Department of Transport to stop the rush to build roads at any price. As one of the Cabinet's few pro-Europeans, he has adopted a generally positive attitude in European Environment Council meetings.

But we should not be uncritical. Parents of asthma sufferers, or those who cough and splutter as they walk down smoggy streets, will not be impressed to learn that the Government's air-quality strategy, published last year, sets no targets for improvement until 2005. Earlier targets would have meant radical shifts in policy, something this Government finds even harder to swallow than the rest of us find the pollution which results from its inaction.

Evidence collected by the Council for the Protection of Rural England indicates that there is still a great deal of building on greenfield sites, and that Mr Gummer himself is failing to block new out-of-town supermarkets even when he has the power to do so. There is a gap between his rhetoric and his actions.

The Environment Secretary also falls short of his rhetoric in the less glamorous but equally important aim of integrating environmental concerns into other policies. A new report from the Green Alliance, published this week, reveals that the "green ministers", a group Mr Gummer chairs, have done little other than consider departmental fuel bills. The impact of different policies on the environment has been largely ignored. Few departments include environmental information in their annual reports. And now the Government is blocking a proposal at the European inter-governmental conference to include a prominent commitment to integration of the environment in the EU treaty. How can John Gummer square this with his professed environmental concern?

A Labour government would do better. Tony Blair stated in January that in his government all departments — the Treasury, the Foreign Office and the Transport Department included — would be departments for the environment. This week he repeated his determination to clean up the air in our cities. Gordon Brown insists that the tax system should be used to encourage work and discourage pollution. At present, the opposite is often the case.

Anyone who thinks that this is all just soundbite stuff should read Labour's comprehensive environmental policy document, *In Trust for Tomorrow*. A theme running through this is that environmental protection and economic regeneration are not alternatives, but must proceed hand in hand. By setting high environmental standards, Britain will become not only cleaner and healthier, but also richer. The market for pollution abatement technology is already as large as the global aerospace market, and by the end of the decade it will be as large as the chemical industry. The scope for making and selling "clean technologies", which use resources more efficiently, producing less pollution and waste, is even greater. And mainstream companies that cut pollution and reduce energy use, whether voluntarily or to meet regulatory requirements, will find their costs falling. As the CBI puts it, "environment means business".

Take the vexed issue of the car. As Tony Blair said on Monday, there is no point in waging war on the car: it has brought freedom to millions. But we have to accept that the car is now responsible for most of the pollution in our cities. We need to do two things. First, we must improve provision of other forms of transport, as in many other European cities. This week we learn that even the RAC, for so long the champion of unrestricted rights for the motorist, has been converted to the importance of public transport, cycling and walking. Secondly, we must make the car more green, so that it becomes more efficient and less polluting. That is why Tony Blair announced a new initiative to bring together government, industry and academic research to develop an emission-free vehicle. And if it is developed successfully, Britain should be able to sell it the world over.

Charles Secret, the Director of Friends of the Earth, caused a stir recently when he claimed that the Tories were greener than Labour. His extraordinary reason is that the Conservatives have a record whereas Labour does not. Can he have failed to notice that for the past 18 years Labour has been in Opposition, where it is impossible to develop a record of action? He also ignores the pioneering work of Labour local authorities, such as Edinburgh, York, Leicester and Kirkcaldy. There are good grounds for optimism. But it will be up to environmental pressure groups to make sure that Labour keeps to its environmental commitments in office. *Baroness Blackstone is a Labour spokesman in the Lords.*

True Brit

IN HER QUEST for the youth vote, Virginia Bottomley, Heritage Secretary and lover of the arts, has turned critic for *Billboard* magazine, a pop music publication read by showbusiness ponytails.

Nanny Bottomley has written a tribute to the pop music industry for the current *Brit Awards* issue of the magazine, in which she lapses into the jargon of pop-pickers: "The creative influence of Oasis, Pulp, Kula Shaker, Supergrass and Elastica contributed to Britain's position as home to some of the coolest music on the planet." The image of Tony Blair addressing the *Brit Awards* and upstaging her last year still burns angrily in Nanny's breast, and she wants to get back on even terms.

She writes nostalgically of the musical icons of her youth — "The Who, Eric Clapton, Gary Glitter and Bob Dylan, veterans still at the top of their profession". She rhapsodises about bands "strutting their stuff" in language suggesting that she has just swallowed the latest issue of *Smash Hits*.

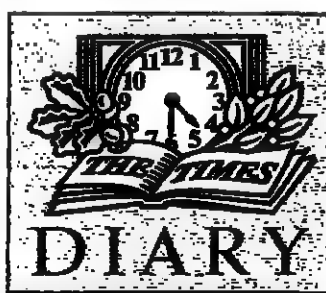
More tellingly, she has been badgering organisers of the *Brit Awards* — where last year politicians including John Prescott and

his wife rubbed shoulders with cocaine-sniffing music-makers — for tickets to the event on Tuesday night. Organiser Bernard Donohue is unimpressed: "Tell the truth, I doubt she'd recognise bands like the Prodigy if they ran up and bit her on the nose."

Many happy returns to Jilly Cooper, chronicler-in-chief of the



Still Glittering?



kaystack romp, who is 60 today. "I'll be off on Monday to collect my £28 or so pension," she says, just back from walking the dogs through Gloucestershire, "and with any luck I'll be pursued by goblins now I'm so rich." Age holds no fears for Mrs Cooper. "Men get blinder as well as us, so before long we'll all just be rosy glows and practitioners of what I call the Calmer Sutra."

Some upset

SHOCK WAVES from the death of Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader, have reached the West Country. Deng's 12-year-old adopted grandson, a pupil at Millfield Preparatory School in Somerset, has returned to China. He went back for half-term and is expected to remain on there for the funeral. Simon Cummins, the

headmaster, says that in the days before Deng's death the boy's guardians felt that he shouldn't return to school, since his grandfather was in poor health. "He's a nice boy and a good pupil," adds Cummins. "His friends all call him Chang. We will be offering him every sort of support that we can if he comes back."

Equity please

BENEATH the immaculately oiled exterior of David Suchet, star of Howard Davies's West End production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and the definitive Inspector Poirot, lies an unexpected streak of militancy.

Along with 200 other top-billing names — Simon Callow, Derek Jacobi, Diana Rigg — Suchet has signed an advertisement backing an Equity campaign for a £20-a-week minimum wage. Negotiations are in progress, but an all-out strike paralysing the West End is not impossible. "If my union orders me out, then I'm out," he says defiantly.

The toast of the smoking room at the *Athenaeum* in London at present is Lefie, the club's evant cat, reunited with his brother Letour after being rescued from the thunderstorms on Wednesday night. Lefie was discovered drenched and supine in St James's Park by passers-by, who dispatched him to his Pall Mall home in a black cab, which a starry doorman had to pay for. "We can't stop him," sighs Tom Weber, the club's assistant manager. "He's even been up to Buckingham Palace to see the Queen, but she sends him back."

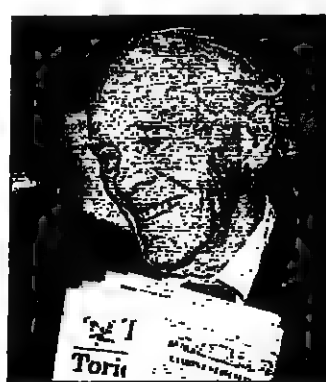
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Peerless life

BOOT of the Beast, aka Lord Deedes, has completed his memoirs. They will be published in October under the title *Is There*



The Good Deedes

Much More of This Old Boy? For many years Deedes was courted by prospective biographers keen to earn a dime writing up a life which has ranged from Abyssinia as a war reporter (and model for the hero of Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*) to Tory back rooms (where he served as Cabinet Minister under Macmillan and best friend of Denis Thatcher) and *The Daily Telegraph*, as Editor for 12 years. But he turned down all would-be biographers, and was only persuaded three years ago to get scribbling himself by a lady-friend who promised to help with the research.

P.H.S

John G. 1.520



LIONS AND UNICORNS

Neither party convinces on the constitution

Observers of yesterday's House of Commons debate on the constitution may have felt as if they had entered a topsy-turvy world. On the government benches sat the Opposition, putting to the test the policies of the other side. John Major presumably did not intend it to look that way. But this blistering debate allowed the country a foretaste of what could lie ahead later this year, if Labour should win power.

Mr Major's speech was persuasive in parts, and delivered in the confidence that, on this issue at least, he has the full support of his party. Whatever his colleagues — and indeed the Tory party — might have thought in the past, they have all now recanted their earlier support for devolution and reform of the House of Lords. The Prime Minister will be able to blast Labour on constitutional reform during the election campaign, not just because its plans are flawed, but also because he will be bolstered by unaccustomed unity on his own side.

That is not to say, however, that he is bound to win the argument. Indeed, he sometimes risks damaging his case by overstatement. For instance, to claim that separate taxation can take place only in a separate nation — attacking a Scottish parliament's tax-varying powers — is to ignore the many countries in the world in which local income tax is levied. To say that "any Honourable Member of this House should be ashamed" to endorse Labour's plans is to insult the legitimately held beliefs of many thoughtful MPs. And to claim that Labour, in its constitutional reforms, is putting party before country can sound hollow from a party that is determined to keep the overwhelmingly Conservative ranks of hereditary peers.

Mr Major's other problem is that, in opposing all Labour's constitutional reforms, however desirable, he runs the danger of offering the electorate a negative agenda. Few outside Westminster believe that all is for the best in the best of all possible constitutional worlds. By setting

their faces against Labour's reforms, the Conservatives are in danger of sounding like the diehards who predicted apocalyptic consequences during the passage of each Reform Act in the 19th century. The world did not fall in when the franchise was extended.

Mr Major's over-statements overshadowed some of his best points. On one question, at least, the Prime Minister had Tony Blair on the ropes yesterday. The Labour leader delivered one of his best performances in the House, making a positive case for constitutional reform instead of the defensive positions that he has adopted all too frequently recently. But, despite promising to answer the West Lothian Question, he never did. This was a glaring hole in the centre of his speech.

Labour's position on the asymmetry that will result from Scottish devolution is unsustainable. Scotland is already over-represented. Scottish MPs have fewer constituents than English MPs. Once they no longer have to deal with their constituents' complaints about health, education, transport, agriculture and so on, what will they do with their time? There will be a strong case for reducing the number of Scottish Members at Westminster, a move that would run counter to Labour's own interests.

Mr Major has a West Belfast question of his own to answer. Why should Ulster MPs vote on English and Welsh legislation if they have their own devolved assembly? After next Thursday, when the Government looks likely to lose its majority in the *Writ of Summons* by-election and will rely on the Unionists to prop it up, this question may look all too pertinent. The Prime Minister claimed yesterday that an Ulster assembly "would provide the surest possible foundation for maintaining Northern Ireland's place firmly within the United Kingdom". If this is so, why would any Scottish parliament do the opposite? Mr Blair's constitutional proposals are certainly flawed. But there are anomalies on the other side too.

JURY JUDGMENT

Twelve good men are sometimes not good enough

There are dangers in empowering judges at the expense of juries, but there are occasions when matters are better not left entirely to 12 laymen. The development of a culture of compensation and the consequent growth in litigation has tested the capacity of juries to operate effectively in some civil cases. The choice of trial by jury given to defendants in certain criminal cases also places sometimes unnecessary demands on citizens and the justice system. The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, and the Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, are not natural allies; but both want to see limitations placed on the operation of juries and both are acting legitimately in the public interest.

As matters stand, serious criminal cases such as rape automatically go to jury trial and minor offences such as traffic crime are dealt with by magistrates as a matter of course; but in certain "intermediate" or "either way" cases, such as theft, the defendant can choose whether to be tried in front of a jury or by magistrates. Lord Runciman's Royal Commission felt, in the words of one of its members, Professor Michael Zander, that as a matter of principle "it is as wrong to leave to the defendant the choice of court as it would be to leave him the choice of judge".

Not only is it wrong in principle to allow a defendant to make a decision which should be a matter for the justice system, it is damaging in practice. Trials start later, take longer and, in many cases, are pre-empted by guilty pleas at the last minute after long preparation. Justice delayed is justice denied. There is nothing, in principle, to prevent any defendant charged with an

offence such as theft receiving an appropriate hearing in front of magistrates.

The courts' decisions are, of course, open to criticism and one of the areas where sniping has been most justified has been the level of damages awarded in those civil cases where juries sit. Libel has been the most notorious, with public distaste for newspaper excesses translated into inflated awards. Established practice had been to allow the jury, unadvised, to decide the level of compensation. In 1996 the then Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Bingham, compared the situation of the jury in such circumstances to "the position of sheep loosed in an unfenced common, with no shepherd".

Juries in defamation cases can now be guided by the judge to an appropriate level of damages to ensure that a slight in print does not yield sums which dwarf the level of compensation for a crippling injury. This week, Lord Woolf further restrained juries inclined to award over-generous damages when he set an upper limit of £50,000 on the amount courts should award citizens who have been maltreated by the police. Understandable horror at the indignities that individuals have endured at the hands of those who should be their protectors may have driven up damages. Unfortunately, even though the award was supposed to penalise the police, it has been the taxpayer who has had to pick up the bill. A limit on awards not only restores balance to justice, it also safeguards the public purse. The *onus* is now on the police to ensure that their own disciplinary machinery affords victims of injustice the real compensation of seeing villains in uniform appropriately punished.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

Australians prefer black sheep to blue blood

The eminence enjoyed in England by those whose people came over with the Conqueror, and in the United States by those whose families were at the first Thanksgiving, is extended to those Australians whose ancestors were men of firm convictions. There are none so noble in Oz as those who can boast a felon for a forefather. Now it has been revealed as a source of pride that one of Australia's tallest poppies, the premier John Howard, has roots in Botany Bay. It is one of Australia's many charms that status depends more on having black sheep in the family than blue blood.

England has had criminals of consequence, from the noble Robin of Locksley to the amateur crackman and gentleman around town A. J. Raffles, but a skeleton key in the closet has usually been a badge of shame. A father, or father-figure, with form has been a blight more than a blessing. From *Great Expectations* to *The Railway Children*, a stretch inside has cast a dark shadow over all associated with the inmate. While Mr Howard's counterparts in the British Cabinet would gain no cultural cachet from criminal connections, British politicians have nevertheless recognised that an exotic origin, humble start or raffish edge to their ancestry can invest subfusc CVs with a little interest. John Major, who famously escaped from the glamour of Standard Chartered Bank, enjoys a background in its own

way as bohemian as any Freud or Sackville West. The choirboy air of Tony Blair is pleasingly offset by the presence in the family album of his strolling vagabond of a father-in-law, Tony Booth. But our party leaders, although they have rough diamonds for relatives, cannot rattle the ancestral leg-irons as can Mr Howard.

Cynics might account the respect which Australians show those fellow citizens whose ancestors endured transportation a form of inverted snobbery. It is possible to detect in the veneration of ancient convicts evidence of a nation trying a touch too hard to show it is no longer in the grip of what Paul Keating called "the cultural cringe". But it would be altogether wrong to assume that a desire to thumb one's nose at the old country is the main motivation. The status accorded the old lags' offspring is a sign of the new Australia's tolerant and inclusive spirit.

Addressing the American Democratic convention in 1988, Jesse Jackson celebrated his country's melting-pot powers when he proclaimed: "My ancestors came over in slave ships, Governor Dukakis's ancestors came over in immigrant ships, but we're all in the same boat now." The fact that Mr Howard's own prison-hulk parentage is as much a cause for pride as Mr Jackson's plantation roots shows that both countries are comfortable with their past but do not want to live in it. That is certainly a conviction worth boasting about.

Ulster lessons on Scots devolution

From Mr Jonathan Caine

Sir, Mr Alan Beith, MP (lefter, February 19), is correct to draw the analogy between the "West Lothian" and the "South Armagh" questions. I would remind him, though, that between 1921 and 1972, when Stormont was prorogued, the fact that Westminster politicians were deprived of a close involvement in the grievances of the non-Unionist minority proved extremely detrimental to the political life of Northern Ireland.

To compensate for the existence of Stormont, Ulster's representation at Westminster was originally cut to 12, far fewer than its population warranted (the number was increased to 17 in 1963, owing to the Province's lack of devolved legislative institutions). The effect was to ensure that the talented politicians went to Stormont while Westminster attracted (often literally) the second eleven.

If Scotland were to follow this model, fairness and consistency would require a similar cut — something which the Liberal Democrats are at least prepared to countenance but Labour are not. Throughout the Stormont period — when Ulster Unionists took the Tory whip — only one Northern Ireland MP held a significant post in the UK Government, which further marginalised the Province and its politics.

Stormont coexisted with Westminster because it was controlled exclusively by politicians who used it to reinforce the Union. Its governments followed both Conservative and Labour legislation "step by step", only rarely embarking on bold initiatives of their own. It is hard to imagine this happening in the case of a newly established Scottish parliament, given the expectations of its supporters.

It has become fashionable for Liberal Democrat and Labour politicians to use Northern Ireland to justify the inconsistencies in their plans for Scotland. But a selective use of the facts cannot hide the damage that their proposals would do to the unity of the United Kingdom.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN CAINE
Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 1991-95.
c/o Box 162, London SW3 4JT.
February 19.

Unionist vote

From Mr Michael Bicknell

Sir, After watching the Government, the House of Commons and the nation being disgracefully held to ransom by a handful of self-seeking Unionist MPs in Monday's debate on BSE, one wonders how long it can be before we send the whole lot packing.

Most English people of my acquaintance, who feel we owe no debt to history, already regard Ireland in general, and Ulster in particular, as a con-founded nuisance.

May we hope the outcome of the forthcoming election will be sufficient to clear-cut the next government will not be in thrall to any minority group, or combination of groups, able to exercise undue influence over our affairs.

Yours truly,
MICHAEL BICKNELL
11 Longmeadow,
Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon.
February 18.

Lorries and bridges

From the Director General of the Freight Transport Association

Sir, The critical underfunding of the assessment and strengthening of bridges highlighted by the Transport Select Committee's report on road and bridge maintenance (report, February 12, later editions) will most certainly lead to otherwise avoidable transport problems.

However, I strongly dispute the suggestion by the committee that this neglect will force the closure of hundreds of routes when 40-tonne juggernauts are allowed into the country from January 1, 1999.

The Government's bridge assessment programme conducted over the past ten years has already led to many weight bans on bridges, mostly at 7.5 tonnes and at 16 tonnes. We already have 44-tonne vehicles operating to UK railroads and this has necessitated only a small number of additional bans for lorries over 38 tonnes. Therefore fears that more general use of the heavier lorries will lead to widespread damage to and closure of bridges are a red herring.

Since the Government seems to have turned its back on the road-building programme, it is essential that we maintain and protect our present infrastructure to the right level. That means increasing investment and getting on with the job.

The introduction of 44-tonne lorries moving more goods on fewer vehicles is a means of making the most of what we have got.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GREEN,
Director General,
Freight Transport Association,
Hermes House, St John's Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
February 12.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Tackling challenge of job insecurity

From Dr John Philpott, Director of the Employment Policy Institute

Sir, Your leading article, "Old party card" (February 11), questions the proposal floated by the Shadow Employment Minister, Mr Peter Hain, MP, to introduce job security agreements across the public sector. In doing so you cite research that challenges the Labour Party's assertion that job insecurity is life in Britain today. However, a balanced assessment of available evidence suggests that Mr Hain may have a point.

First, you state that "most Britons in work are covered by employment protection". This is literally true but misleading as to changes over time. In 1975, 91 per cent of employees were in jobs covered by basic employment rights. By 1990 that figure had dropped to 62 per cent; it moved up again to 70 per cent in 1995 but only after EU law forced the inclusion of more part-time employees into legal protection.

Secondly, you say that people stay in the same job nearly as long as they did 20 years ago. But this observation disguises vast differences between the experience of men and women. The average length of time a man stays in the same job has fallen by 25 per cent since 1975, whereas women stay in jobs slightly longer because of the greater availability of maternity leave arrangements.

Finally, you ignore the substantial costs that people incur nowadays when they lose a job. People made redundant in the late 1990s spend 20 per cent longer unemployed than was the case in the 1970s, while the value of any state benefits they might receive has shrunk relative to earnings. Moreover, those lucky enough to find a new job will on average be paid 20 per cent less than they were in their previous job and have fewer perks (with the financial penalty associated with such "trading down" in the jobs market rising the older a person is). Taking all these factors together it is no wonder that so many people feel insecure in their jobs and are anxious as to what might happen to them if made

redundant. You may or may not be justified in questioning the efficacy of Mr Hain's specific proposals but his basic premise is surely correct.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN PHILPOTT,
Director,
Employment Policy Institute,
Southbank House,
Black Prince Road, SE1.

From the Shadow Minister for Employment

Sir, How on earth you could criticise Labour's proposals to tackle job insecurity as old-style "beer and sandwiches at Downing Street" beggars belief.

We are encouraging companies in the private sector to introduce job security agreements in return for greater flexibility. Already Blue Circle Cement and United Distillers have done this, quite independently, and other companies are following where it suits them. We have also suggested that the same principle could be looked at by managers in the public sector.

This is not old-fashioned corporatism. It reflects decentralised, autonomous bargaining which sets a new and welcome agenda, enabling business to think long-term and individuals to plan for their own futures long-term.

Of course there can be no promise of a "job for life", and neither are we suggesting some Soviet-style central wage fixing or protectionism. But millions are trapped in the world of temporary, short-term or casual work — a revolving-door economy where people are in and out of jobs and cannot plan for the future — and Labour is trying to address this situation.

Meanwhile the Tories, apparently with your support, are ignoring it and even denying it exists.

Yours sincerely,
PETER HAIN,
Labour Shadow Minister for Employment,
House of Commons,
February 12.

Judgment on Bosnian war orphan

From Ms Marie Staunton

Sir, Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division, made the judgment of Solomon in the case of Edita Keranovic (Bosnian orphan to stay in Britain), February 18. He rightly put the best interests of the child first, as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The courts refused to countenance an adoption but ordered her British foster family to ensure that Edita visits her natural family four times a year and learns their language.

As Sir Stephen himself will be reviewing Edita's case her interests will be protected — but what of the 7,500 other children of former Yugoslavia who are separated from their families, 5,000 of them still outside the country? Their best hope lies in programmes for children to find their parents and new homes. The Centre for Social Work in Zenica for example, implementing a UNICEF programme with funds from the British Government

for unaccompanied children, has already reunited 44 families in the region and is working with 74 others. We are also working with British experts and local psychiatrists in identifying traumatised children and providing the culturally appropriate treatment.

The impulse to snatch a child from war and poverty is very human but 50 years' experience has taught us that the enduring humanitarian solution for children caught in conflict is long-term partnerships with local families, organisations and government. We need to be present, with the right resources, not just during the conflict but for a long time after in order to protect child victims.

Yours faithfully,
MARIE STAUNTON
(Deputy Executive Director, Programmes),
Unicef, United Kingdom Committee,
55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2.
February 19.

Adoption refusal

From Mr James Lawrence

Sir, In your report "Darrell chooses wrong family to support case" (February 18) my wife, Roma, and I were said to have told social workers handling our application to adopt a mixed-race child that "children should not be allowed to listen to pop music but should listen to Beethoven instead and that they should dress in sensible clothes rather than follow fashions". The impression given is that we were rejected for being a pair of reactionary rednecks, not because of our "lack of understanding of racial issues" — the reason given to us by Norfolk Social Services.

We were not in fact allowed to meet the adoption panel, which made its judgment solely on written reports, including an essay we were required to write on our ideas about child-rearing.

Product placement

From Mr Derek Jole

Sir, The practice of dropping real brand-names into fictional surroundings may be a good deal older than Mr Henry Burton thinks (letter, February 14). For instance, if Jane Austen's reference to Broadwood is just the sordid outcome of a deal she struck with a passing pianoforte salesman, how much more likely that, 400 years earlier, a hotel-keeper made it worth G. Chaucer's while to set the opening location of his *Tales* beside the Tabard Inn.

The power of "product placements" lies precisely in our never knowing which have been commercially arranged, which not. They merge, like spies, into the fictional spell, and share fiction's special truth. The English breakfasts served by Miss Lee, Arthur Ransome's Chinese pirate queen, always included "Oxford" marmalade: the single good, she caustically observed, that Oxford had ever given to the world.

Yours faithfully,
D. B. JOLE,
The Old Vicarage Cottage,
Chesteron, Oxfordshire.
February 16.

Price too high for classical scholars

From Mr Jim Bourlet

Sir, The imposition by Edexcel, formerly the University of London examination board, of an extra £15 charge on every Latin and Greek A-level candidate (report, February 18), should be condemned. Not only might it be breaking the spirit of the Board's charitable status but, in simple economic terms, the idea of charging extra for those students taking subjects where there are very few candidates is fundamentally misconceived.

The education system faces the task of producing variety, not uniformity, and giving opportunity through study. Anyone with a rare ability of any sort is almost certain to find employment and a career, whilst those with abilities achieved by all will, by definition, face immense competition in the job market, an uncertain future and periods of unemployment.

Even if only one student chose Latin, Greek, Gujarati, Japanese, or any other language, it would be all the more, rather than less, reason to charge the standard examination fee. This would be a cross-subsidy properly used. A higher charge is a price signal to the student and the schools in precisely the wrong direction.

Yours faithfully,
JIM BOURLET,
Department of Business Studies,
London Guildhall University,
84 Moorgate, EC2.
February 18.

From Dr D. H. Berry

Sir, It comes as no surprise that teachers should be expressing "outrage" at Edexcel's decision to impose a surcharge on its small number of Greek and Latin A-level candidates. Nor would it be surprising if intelligent Greek and Latin students chose to desert Edexcel in favour of rival examination boards.

Edexcel's decision clearly shows that what we need is a single examination board: that would remove the need for surcharges. Moreover, a single examination board, setting the same high standards for all, would in my opinion prevent schools seeking to improve their standing in the league tables by entering their students with boards they judge to be less academically demanding.

Yours faithfully,
D. H. BERRY,
The School of Classics,
University of Leeds, LS2 9JT.
February 19.

From Dr Peter Jones

Sir, What can "Edexcel" mean, the name of the board that is attempting to get rid of minority subjects like Latin and Greek at A-level by levying a surcharge? If "Ed" stands for "education" — surely the last thing it has in mind — it would be better named "Edicence": tax and cut.

Yours etc,
PETER JONES,
Department of Classics,
University of Newcastle, NE1 7RU
February 19.

Fighting funds

From Mr Michael Bird

Sir, The problem with attempting to compare Bill Gates's net worth with the wealth of Carnegie, Rockefeller et al (leading article, February 15; report same day) is finding a suitable inflation measure. Cost of living indices are no use, being based on the humble needs of Mr and Mrs Joe Average.

May I suggest an alternative measure? In ancient times a man was said to be truly rich only if he could afford to run a war out of his own pocket.

By that sobering criterion I am glad to say today's billionaires are paupers.

Yours etc,
MICHAEL BIRD,
5 Glenham Gardens, SW13.
February 16.

Time and motion

From Major R. J. de V. Wade, RE

Sir, Your leading article ("The right track", February 12) must comfort the City, which has made financial killings from rail privatisation — as your Business section often reports.

But if "reliable information to passengers" is, as you say, "almost impossible to obtain" — what's the use of having punctual trains?

Yours sincerely,
R. J. WADE,
9 Catherine Close,
Shrivenham, Oxfordshire.
February 12.

In hot pursuit

From Mr R. B. Viccajee

Sir, After a hard Saturday preparing a "self-assessment" tax lecture, imagine my consternation on opening my Chinese takeaway fried rice, to find, printed on its lid, an Inland Revenue advertisement showing "Horrible Hector" (the Inspector) with a knife and fork, warning the diner not to "get stuffed by Self Assessment".

Is there no escape?

Yours faithfully,
R. B. VICCAJEE
(Chartered accountant),
4 Abbots Close, Guildford, Surrey.
February 18.

OBITUARIES

CHRISTOPHER DRIVER

Christopher Driver, journalist and former editor of *The Good Food Guide*, died of a brain tumour on February 18 aged 64. He was born on December 1, 1932.

Christopher Driver was a journalist and critic who believed passionately in the application of standards, and was distinguished academically to know what he was talking about.

Whether he was concerned himself with food, or, during his later incarnation, with the dead (he created with W. L. Webb, from 1987, a proper obituary department at *The Guardian* newspaper), his judgment was clear and rational. When discussing meals consumed or lives lived, there were certain characteristics required, without which there would be nothing to celebrate.

Driver's view of standards has gone completely out of fashion, replaced, as he would have seen it, by the tyranny of the market — price rather than value. In 1982, in the preface to his last *Good Food Guide*, he wrote: "When a couple, a family, or even a large international hotel chain engage to cook a meal for paying customers and create a setting in which to do it, not just a skill but a whole personality is put on trial under an uncomfortably bright light."

"This is especially true in Britain, where so much of life is infused by the enjoyable embarrassments of class in all its delicate gradations: besides, most places large or small in this country are unable to operate, as the French do, beneath a carapace of technical and cultural confidence."

Driver was the kind of critic who knew his enemies, and was not inclined to reassure those who had betrayed their calling by letting standards slip. He spoke his mind, a habit long-standing and never suppressed. A memo to Alastair Hetherington, then *Guardian* Editor, in the early 1960s ran: "Since I've started speaking out of turn, can I also suggest that your own interests and sympathies are now too narrowly focused for the paper's good (mine, perhaps, too widely)."

Driver's tenure of the editorship of *The Good Food Guide* for a dozen years from 1970 was not surprisingly sometimes uncomfortable. A letter to *The Times* in 1978 was part of an attempted coup against him at the Consumers' Association, which had taken over the *Guide* from Raymond Postgate, its founder, in 1963-64. Twelve signatures, a suitably apostolic jury, renounced with his presumed dislike of commercially successful restaurateurs and the sharp tone of his criticism.

But the odd blend of democratic and elitist taste, represented by the *Guide* under his direction, was traditionally based on a wide sampling of self-appointed judges' opinions — the punters themselves who were sternly encouraged to do their bit: "Saints and professionals write their reports before



they sleep," he warned. "After 24 hours and further meals, the edges of the impression start to fade."

The raw ingredients would be boiled down in the sub-editorial marmite and then passed through the moult of Driver's idiosyncratic literary manners. The *Guide* reflected in its peculiar way his own modified snobbery. Later, as an obituary editor, he could seldom resist adding that little extra pinch of coriander, and it got him into trouble: the subjects might be dead, but distinguished obituary writers sometimes resented being so creatively interfered with.

However, open his editorial policy might be in principle, Driver was too good and engaged a writer to resist the possibility of imposing his own attitude on material. The *Guide* was very much his voice, therefore, which for some vitiated its supposed dispassionate, objective, comprehensiveness. The fact that *Guardian* obituaries appeared on what was called the "Personal" page, a title ambiguously evocative of "personal services", fitted both his approach to

the morbid zone and his editorial agenda perfectly.

There was certainly a bit (perhaps, even, a bite) of a schoolmaster about him. Food and drink, which he enjoyed and about which he expatiated professionally for so long, are comforters whose enjoyment is usually associated with a loose corset. Yet Driver, despite the fact of his firmly Protestant Christian faith and practice, was in no way a puritan.

He had a great capacity for enjoyment — was a music lover and decent string-player, was a genuine enthusiast for female company, was a real lover of good and special food, and was a devoted anthologist of poetry and prose. His collection of sundry literary figures' jottings about music, *Music for Love*, which Wiedenfeld published in 1994 after his brain tumour had been excised (only a temporary remedy, sadly), was dedicated to "viola wives and other partners".

Christopher Proot Driver was a representative of the old traditions at the *Manchester Guardian*, liberal,

nonconformist, elitist, yet democratic, that have almost completely disappeared under the present more arrogant and exclusive dispensation.

A late product of the old-style classical education, centred on Latin and Greek, he went first to the Dragon School at Oxford and ended up as head boy at Rugby when the Anker Government was running out of steam. He then took a scholarship to read Classical Greats at Christ Church, Oxford. He was an effective debater in the Oxford Union.

But he was firmly non-conformist, a Congregationalist by conviction who attended and helped to restore the local United Reformed Church chapel at Highgate near his home. The first book he wrote, in 1962, was *A Future for the Free Church?* His next book, two years later, was *The Disarmers: a study in Protest*, a record of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). His father was a medical missionary in India, where he was born. It was perhaps inevitable that he would gravitate to the Left: doing his National Service as a conscientious objector with the Friends Ambulance Corps, where he both learnt some cooking and was heavily involved with refugees from the 1956 Hungarian revolt against Communism.

He learnt his trade as a journalist on the *Liverpool Daily Post*, moving to the *Manchester Guardian* in 1960. He became features editor of *The Guardian* in 1964, when his predecessor, the historian John Russell, moved into academia. In 1968 he left the paper to research and write a critical exploration of what the university ideal should be *The Exploding University*.

Driver created the arts page out of what had been a miscellany page of various features. During his time the women's page developed into the shape that it has since maintained in most newspapers, though it was only after his return to *The Guardian* in a freelance capacity, after leaving *The Good Food Guide*, that food and cookery became a separate (and weekly) empire.

In 1983 he published *The British At Table, 1940-1980*. His last book, published just this month, was *John Evelyn: Cook, a transcription of part of the great diarist's Household Book of the 1680s*. He was a bibliophile, and happily continued the second-hand bookshop his father in retirement had run in Shaftesbury. His 1983 reprint of James E. Masters' book on Thomas Hardy's Shaftesbury, beautifully illustrated with superb woodcuts, is a delightful product.

His poems, a slim volume entitled *Strokes and including verses*, he wrote soon after his first collapse (the initial hint, perhaps, of the tumour, that eventually, finally, destroyed his ability even to speak), were published last year with equal typographical taste by Libanus Press, Marlborough.

He married Margaret Perfect in 1958. They had three daughters of whom two are professional musicians.

DONALD STOKES

Professor Donald Stokes, political scientist, died on January 26 aged 69. He was born on April 1, 1927.



DONALD STOKES made outstanding contributions to the study of political science both in the United States and in Britain. He played a large part in developing the concept of "party identification" which has been so important in all subsequent writing about electoral behaviour. In two pioneering works of electoral research, especially — *The American Voter*, of which he was a co-author in 1960, and *Political Change in Britain*, his 1969 collaboration with David Butler — he exercised a lasting influence in the field.

He came from a long line of Philadelphia Quakers, most of them doctors. All his life he echoed his ancestry, manifesting a calm, courteous, humorous, patrician certainty. His perfect manners and his elegant diction disguised a brilliant radical intellect.

Academically powerful and original, he was personally kind and understanding. He was perceptive about his colleagues and his students and, if they had any divine spark or human generosity, he was on their side.

His mathematical skills enabled him to take advantage of the coming of the computer age. But he kept statistics in their place: he would often dismiss an article as "a mere survey report". When he presented evidence, he would only use a table to make a clear and specific point. His own prose was elegant, and he would advise others to "let the argument breathe".

As a Quaker, Donald Stokes escaped military service by working as a pharmacist's assistant in the Merchant Marine for two years, before he went to Princeton University in 1947 for his BA and then on to Yale as a graduate. After getting his doctorate and marrying Sybil, a fellow student,

he moved to Michigan where he became part of the team that produced in 1960 *The American Voter*, the most influential of all postwar works on electoral politics.

An encounter at a conference in Ann Arbor led Sir Norman Chester to persuade the Fellows of Nuffield College, Oxford, to invite Stokes across the Atlantic to undertake a comparable work in Britain. He came to Oxford in January 1963 and, in that coldest of winters, developed a lifelong Anglophilia, finding many friends at Westminster and on various campuses.

Between 1963 and 1970, together with David Butler, he supervised five nationwide surveys of the British electorate. These were the basis for their path-breaking book, *Political Change in Britain*. The first edition in 1969 provoked an aggressive review in *The Times* from Iain Macleod, but it won the Woodrow Wilson Prize for the best work in the field of political science published that year and it is still used as a basic text in voting studies. Stokes later helped to launch Australian studies along the lines he had pioneered in *The American Voter* and *Political Change*.

In 1972 he moved from Michigan back to Princeton as the Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and

International Affairs, where he reigned for twenty years, raising large funds and luring distinguished visitors to talk with the extraordinarily lively group of students that he had recruited. He also gave lectures that were models of clarity and depth.

A lifelong Democrat, he was nonetheless twice chosen as a neutral arbiter to settle party battles over the redistricting of New Jersey's congressional seats.

He was a perfectionist. He wrote slowly and he gave his time generously. His friends lamented the great works on representation and other subjects that never appeared. But in his later years he turned from electoral studies to science policy. In seminars and lectures he explored the ways in which inventions were made and applied and he analysed the role of government in helping or hindering scientific advance.

His final monument will be published this autumn, as *Pastor's Quadrant: Basic Science and Technological Innovation*. It will at last reach a wider audience, after the many years when its key chapters circulated so influentially around the Washington Establishment.

His wife Sybil survives him, together with their two daughters.

DR STANLEY FIRTH

Dr Stanley Firth, former Medical Superintendent, Brighton General Hospital, died on January 24 aged 94. He was born on November 21, 1902.



STANLEY FIRTH had the curious distinction of spending 50 years of his life in hospital residence. He was born at Withington Workhouse Infirmary, Manchester, where his father was Administrator and his mother Matron.

From childhood he saw at first hand the conditions and long-term care offered to more than 2,000 elderly and infirm patients in this Poor Law Institution. After his father's death in the First World War, his mother took on the additional role of Administrator and oversaw the development of the institution into a huge military hospital for more than 2,000 wounded soldiers; an achievement for which she was appointed MBE and awarded the Royal Red Cross. In the circumstances, it was perhaps not surprising that Stanley Joseph Firth decided to study medicine, qualifying in 1925 after education at Manchester Grammar School and Manchester University. After hospital appointments in the Manchester area he moved to Hastings, before being appointed, at the early age of 30, Medical Superintendent of Brighton Municipal Hospital, which at that time was a Poor Law Workhouse very similar to Withington. He was to remain in this post for the next 25 years.

He was held in high esteem by his patients and peers alike, and served as chairman of the local British Medical Association before being elected a Fellow of the BMA. He was an active founder member of the Brighton Post-Graduate Centre and president of the

vision who recognised the need to develop geriatric medicine as a specialised discipline. In the course of his career he saw responsibility for the care of the elderly transferred from the "Guardian of the Poor", through the public assistance committee, to the local council under the public health committee and, finally, in 1948 to state control under the National Health Service. Remarkably, the work of administering all the changes needed to transform the Brighton hospital into a large general hospital was achieved with an administrative staff of only two — a senior and a junior clerk.

In 1952 Firth was appointed the first consultant physician in geriatric medicine to the Brighton hospitals, and became chairman of the SE Metropolitan Board Advisory Committee in Geriatric Medicine, a position he held until his retirement in 1967.

He was held in high esteem by his patients and peers alike, and served as chairman of the local British Medical Association before being elected a Fellow of the BMA. He was an active founder member of the Brighton Post-Graduate Centre and president of the

Brighton and Sussex Medical-Chirurgical Society. His recognition of the importance of ancillary services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody and hospital almoners — now incorporated into the social services — led him to represent their interests in Nalco (National Association of Local Government Officers), and he was vice-chairman of one of the nine Whitley Councils established within the NHS.

He retained his interest in medicine throughout retirement, keeping abreast of the continuing changes in health-care. His only regret was that plans for a new purpose-built hospital near the site now occupied by the University of Sussex never materialised.

As a relaxation he developed a deep interest in yachting and was rightly proud of his Board of Trade Yachtmaster's Certificate, for which he studied during the war under the redoubtable Captain O.M. Watts. His boat *Falcon II* was one of the "little ships" which rescued Allied soldiers from the Dunkirk beaches.

His wife Ada, also a doctor, predeceased him in 1987. He is survived by a son and a daughter, both in medicine.

BRIAN MORCOM

Brian Morcom, authority on tax mitigation at the Bar and later a Social Security Commissioner, died on January 29 aged 71. He was born on May 31, 1925.

IN NOVEMBER 1981 Brian Morcom, who at the time had at the Bar one of the largest advisory practices directed to the minimisation of capital and other tax liabilities, left to take up an appointment as one of the Social Security Commissioners.

It might be thought ironic that he should have aban-

doned advising the wealthy on ways of reducing their liability to tax in favour of dealing with a wholly different spectrum of society. For as a Social Security Commissioner he heard appeals from Social Security Tribunals, where the claimants were generally penniless.

However, the transformation was perhaps not as marked as superficially it may have appeared. For the same mental processes were called into play, and social security law involved the construction and interpretation of legislation even more complex than the tax statutes with which

Morcom had hitherto been concerned. He was ideally suited to this new field of activity, and he discharged the office with great distinction. His output of decisions was prodigious, and he was very rarely appealed to the Court of Appeal, and even more rarely overturned. In 1993 he became in addition a Child Support Commissioner.

John Brian Morcom was born in Carmarthen, the son of a jeweller, and was educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Carmarthen, and Balliol College, Oxford, where he read classical moderations and law. Before going to

Oxford he was for a short period in the Oakdale Colliery as a "Bever Boy", set to work in the mines instead of being conscripted into the Armed Forces. Thereafter he served, from 1944 to 1947, in the Royal Army Medical Corps, where he learnt to type, an accomplishment which he carefully kept secret from members of his chambers.

He was called to the Bar, Inner Temple, in 1952, and became the pupil of Alfred Baden Fuller. He steadily built up a general Chancery practice until in early 1959 he produced the first edition of his *Estate Duty Saving*.

This publication, which was the first substantive work of its kind directed to tax mitigation, was far-ranging in its scope and reflected, among other things, his earlier Chancery practice.

The book went into five editions and changed Morcom's career. From then on he devoted himself almost exclusively to tax mitigation, and became at the junior Bar probably his leading practitioner. So great was his reputation that in his professional time that each year in the period immediately before and after the Budget he was at his desk by 5am.

Morcom spoke Welsh fluently and, as a Social Security Commissioner, regularly travelled to Cardiff to hear Welsh appeals. While at the Bar he had been on the Wales and Chester Circuit. He had a second home in Pembroke-shire and extensive forestry interests in Wales. Having completed 15 years in office last November, he was at the time of his death on the point of retirement, and was looking forward to returning to his roots in Wales.

He married, first, Valerie, who died in 1960, and secondly Sheila, who died in 1986. He leaves a son by his first marriage and a daughter by his second.

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ON THIS DAY

February 21, 1936

Based on H.G. Wells' book *The Shape of Things to Come*, this remarkable film foresees war, plague and planetary invasion. The brilliant music, still played at concerts, was by Sir Arthur Bliss.

from the ruins endowed with such wisdom, detachment, and nobility as would put Socrates himself to shame.

How exactly this happened Mr. Wells, of course, does not say, but one may have a faint suspicion that it was the result of an almost mystic communion with machinery. The suspicion is increased by the bitterness with which Mr. Wells pursues an unfortunate artist who does not care for machinery. In fact at the end of the film almost becomes the vehicle of one of those private and envenomed quarrels to which artists of different persuasions are so often prone. But Mr. Wells does not conduct the quarrel quite fairly; as an artist who cares for machinery, which is surely what he is, he scores heavily, but chiefly by deciding all art. And his artist, who

bears the honourable name of Theocritus, is given more sins than artistic heresy: he is foolish enough to dislike the habit which the young have now contracted of running into every kind of danger, even in sport. No doubt this is intended — it is almost the only indication in the film of any real concern with the psychological problems of Utopia — as a substitute for the dangers of war. But it is not a substitute for the emotions of hostility, and a division in which such extraordinary excitement, with rising and revolution, is aroused by a single artist's blasphemy against machinery can hardly be quite as pleasant or stable as it appears.

But the message of Mr. Wells's film, emphatic as it is, may well pass unnoticed at the time before so imposing, one might almost say so beautiful, a spectacle. The scenes of war at the beginning are really appalling: the ruins of a modern English town are thoroughly romantic in the Roman manner; and the new world, with all its machinery and vistas of glass and steel, is so large and glittering, and so obviously a working model, that one cannot imagine how it could have been done. The most extraordinary aeroplane move over vast and genuine landscapes, and a whole underground town is displayed with no trace of cardboard in its construction. In fact, with such a setting Mr. Wells's story, however doubtful his implied arguments may appear and however loose the speeches, cannot fail to carry the spectator away. Any rhetoric against such a background is superfluous.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21 1997

Barings bondholders could be in line for settlement



Father Charles, campaigner

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of Barings bondholders who lost £275 million in the collapse of the merchant bank could be in line for a compensation settlement in the coming months.

As the second anniversary of the £230 million crash approaches, ING Barings and a number of other parties are looking for a suitable mechanism to make compensation payments.

Since ING, the Dutch banking and insurance combine, stepped in to rescue Barings pressure has been

mounting for such a settlement. Among the losers were elderly investors who bought into one or more of the three bond and loan note issues because of their high rates of interest and the life and pension funds, such as Scottish Amicable and Legal & General.

Another loser was Downside, Britain's oldest Roman Catholic public school, whose charitable trust lost £50,000. Father Charles, the Abbot of Downside, has campaigned tirelessly to replenish the charity's coffers.

The hugely complex negotiations

towards the payment for investors are at a delicate stage. If any of the parties were to contest the proposed payout, which will be in cash rather than fresh loan notes as had been mooted earlier, then the payments could be delayed.

The investors are split into three categories: those who invested in the first \$150 million note issued in 1986, followed by the second \$150 million note issued in 1994, and the 1994 Perpetual Bondholders, which include Downside Abbey.

The most fortunate are likely to be the investors who hold the 1994 notes.

This money was lent on to the one of the companies in the Barings securities arm that is still trading and investors can expect to receive a more generous offer, but probably not the full amount invested.

However, the money handed over by investors for the 1986 issue and the Perpetual note will not fare so well and will be less than 50 per cent of the original investment. The cash was passed over to companies within the Barings empire that are in the hands of the administrators. The compensation pool in these two cases will consist of moneys recovered by the

administrators which, after the deduction of fees and expenses, is not very large.

Any settlement, therefore, will depend primarily on the amounts contributed by the parties being pursued through the law courts. These include the brokers that issued the notes — Cazenove, BZW, part of Barclays, Hoare Govett, part of ABN Amro, the Dutch bank, and Coopers & Lybrand and Deloitte & Touche, auditors to the Barings group.

Any deal, however, would need to be cleared by the UK courts as "fair and reasonable".

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FTSE 100	4356.1	(-1.9)
Yield	3.61%	
FTSE All share	2122.75	(+1.00)
Nikkei	18051.71	(+452.50)
Dow Jones	6882.30	(-37.33)
S&P Composite	807.90	(-4.58)
US BOND		
Federal Funds	5.75%	(5%)
Long Bond	100%	(100%)
Yield	6.50%	(6.58%)
LONDON MARKET		
3-month Interbank	5.75%	(5.75%)
Life long gilt	11.5%	(11.5%)
3-month (Mar)		
STERLING		
New York	1.8110*	(1.8183)
London	1.8114	(1.8123)
DM	2.7225	(2.7312)
FF	2.1866	(2.2282)
Yen	162.80	(163.57)
S Index	108.8	(104.2)
Tokyo close Yen	123.84	
DOLLAR		
London	1.8350*	(1.8380)
DM	6.6940*	(6.7325)
FF	1.4720*	(1.4857)
Yen	122.80*	(124.55)
S Index	103.8	(104.2)
Tokyo close Yen	123.84	
MONTH 6504 CM		
Bank 16-day May	818.86	(820.50)
GOLD		
London close	\$348.35	(\$348.55)

* denotes midday trading price

Sterling hurting growth, says CBI

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Confederation of British Industry has cut its forecast of economic growth to reflect a weakening in export orders because of the strength of the pound.

In its latest economic forecast, published yesterday, the CBI suggested that GDP growth in the UK for this year, which it had previously estimated at 3.1 per cent, was now likely to be at 2.8 per cent, specifically because of the strength of sterling against leading currencies.

Growth in 1998 is forecast at 2.6 per cent, and though CBI analysts expect sterling to fall back, they are prepared if necessary to reduce their overall growth forecast for this year by a further 0.2 percentage points if the appreciation of the pound continues.

Sterling's strength has also led to what the CBI called "markedly weaker" figures on manufacturing output, where the growth forecast is down from 3.4 to 2.5 per cent, investment is down from 8.1 to 5.4 per cent growth, and export growth is down from 4.6 to 3.9 per cent.

While underlying inflation is now forecast by the CBI to drop from 2.5 to 2.2 per cent this year, it is expected to rise again by the end of 1998 to 2.7 per cent.

Kate Barker, CBI chief economic adviser, said: "While the overall economic outlook remains healthy, there is a less robust projection for the manufacturing sector as exports and profits growth come under pressure."

While the CBI's forecast includes an assumption of interest rates rising by half a point in the third quarter of this year, and then by the same amount to 7 per cent in 1998, the confederation insisted that this was not meant as a policy recommendation, and said it still saw no need for a further rise in rates now.

CBI leaders said that sterling's appreciation and the as yet unclear strength of consumer spending were the main uncertainties surrounding its new economic forecast. While political factors were an uncertainty, as the election drew close, the confederation said it saw nothing to fear economically in any change of government.

Questioned specifically about the prospects for the economy if a Labour government is elected, Ms Barker said: "There is nothing in terms of macroeconomic outlook that would concern us for an 18-month period." She added, however, that there were aspects of microeconomic policy, such as Labour's plans for a minimum wage, which did concern the CBI.

The CBI said the impact on industry of the rise in sterling was clear too in evidence from its latest monthly industrial trends survey. Export demand for manufactured goods weakened this month, with a net balance of 12 per cent of companies reporting falling exports, compared with 8 per cent in January.

Sudhit Jumarikar, CBI associate director of economic analysis, said the figures "confirm that manufacturers' exports are being squeezed by the upward march of sterling." But other figures showed that the rising trend in manufacturers' price increase expectations was now falling away, which the confederation said pointed to a "promising outlook" for output, price inflation.

Windfalls 'will not fuel boom'

By ALASDAIR MURRAY AND ROBERT MILLER

THE Government yesterday moved to play down the potential inflationary impact of windfall payments from the building societies, arguing most of the money will be saved.

In a response to the Treasury Select Committee, the Government said that it expects the impact of the £20 billion in payouts to be limited and will not cause a consumer boom as some economists have argued.

Mortgage lending, according to figures released yesterday by the British Bankers Association, rose to £771 million in January, some 25 per cent higher than the recent monthly average. But the Building Societies Association said mortgage approvals fell to £25 billion from £26 billion. Savers deposited £1.1 billion compared with £634 million in December. M4, the broad measure of money supply, also rose last month to an annual rate of 9.8 per cent in January compared with 9.6 per cent in December. Personal borrowing fell to £366 million from £414 million.



Full house: Andrew Teare, chief executive of Rank, plans ten new Mecca bingo halls

Rank Group expansion to create 3,000 jobs in leisure

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

RANK GROUP will create 3,000 jobs in the UK this year as the company continues to expand its diverse leisure interests, ranging from the Odeon cinema chain to the Hard Rock Cafe.

The biggest new developments include a £25 million entertainment complex in Southampton, complete with a multiplex cinema, bars, nightclubs and a Grosvenor casino. Rank is also opening a £100 million Oasis Forest Holiday Village in Penrith, Cumbria.

The company's plans to roll-

out the Hard Rock brand are expected to begin next month, with a rock music show to be broadcast on VH1, the US music station. The programme has won \$30 million in sponsorship from Pontiac, the US car brand. Rank, which spent £300 million reuniting the Hard Rock brand last year, has also formed Hard Rock Records, which will be launching compilation albums this year.

Rank also aims to develop 20 new Tann Cobleigh pubs, after its £123 million purchase

of the chain last year, as well as ten new Mecca bingo clubs. Details of the expansion plans came as Rank unveiled a fall in full-year profits, before tax and exceptional items, from £408 million to £297 million because of the impact of accounting changes and the sale of part of its stake in Rank Xerox, the photocopier company. But Rank shares rose 27p to 442p after hints that it is buying back shares this year.

Pennington, page 25
Buy-back hopes, page 25

BBC in Flextech pay TV link

By ERIC REGULY AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

THE BBC yesterday approved in principle a £150 million joint venture with Flextech, the cable and satellite TV programmer, to launch the BBC's first subscription channels later this year. A parallel deal with Discovery Communications, Flextech's sister company in the US, is understood to be delayed.

The approval "with qualifications" of the Flextech-BBC joint venture was made at the BBC board of governors' meeting and an official announcement is expected before the end of the month. People close to the talks said that BBC and Flextech

need more time to work out some relatively minor problems. The tax treatment of certain aspects of the deal is one of them.

Flextech, for example, has to buy out Pearson and Cox Communications, the minority shareholders of UK Gold, one of the most profitable pay-TV channels, before it can transfer the channel to the joint venture.

It is not known precisely why the BBC-Discovery talks have bogged down. The sheer size of the deal — the start-up investment is \$500 million — has made it

more complicated than the Flextech transaction. The BBC revealed in September that it was in negotiations with Flextech and Discovery to launch the pay channels on both sides of the Atlantic.

The BBC-Flextech joint venture is to launch eight channels: BBC Showcase, BBC Style, BBC One TV and BBC Horizon are also to be shown by British Digital Broadcasting, the consortium formed by Carlton, Granada and BSkyB to start digital terrestrial transmissions next year. BSkyB is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of The Times.

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هكذا من الامم

Norwich tops up Tessa savers

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

A SUFFOLK schoolteacher who took his building society to court for paying uncompetitive interest was yesterday "delighted" that it had decided to reimburse 16,000 more savers.

Robert Anthony, 49, sued the Norwich and Peterborough after it cut the rate of his tax-exempt special savings account, despite claims that it would pay a "very competitive" rate.

The society had said originally it believed it had "good grounds" to appeal against the judgment, but had decided not to. After receiving up to 100 letters from other customers, it decided to reimburse them.

Martin Armstrong, Norwich and Peterborough group chief executive, now plans to pay up to £2 million in compensation to other savers who opened similar Tessas. A member with a matured Tessa opened in early 1992 who invested the maximum £9,000 will receive approximately £265, the same as Mr Anthony. Those who invested less than the maximum, or who opened accounts at different times, or whose accounts have not yet matured, will be paid similar sums.

Mr Anthony said: "It is an incredible result. I am glad that other people have written in and complained, as I did. It just shows that even if you are a small saver you can get results if you are persistent."

A Norwich and Peterborough spokeswoman said: "At this stage, members who have, or had, Tessa Elite accounts need take no action and we will be contacting them. The society has given careful consideration to the judgment which does not set a precedent. However, we have decided to pay in this particular instance additional interest to other members with Tessa Elite accounts held in similar circumstances."

Mr Anthony believes a further 3,000 savers are entitled to compensation.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.19	2.20	
Austria Sch	20.18	19.89	
Belgium F	80.25	84.35	
Canada \$	2.205	2.145	
Cyprus Dr	0.850	0.785	
Denmark Kr	10.59	10.19	
Finland Mk	6.72	6.07	
France F	6.55	6.37	
Germany DM	2.88	2.87	
Greece Dr	448	450	
Hong Kong \$	10.14	10.14	
Ireland £	1.23	1.00	
Italy Lit	1.58	1.00	
Japan Yen	16.70	8.05	
Italy Lit	214.10	198.10	
Malta	0.658	0.632	
Netherlands Gld	3.212	2.982	
New Zealand \$	2.48	2.35	
Norway Kr	11.41	10.81	
Portugal Esc	885.50	867.50	
S. Africa Rd	7.80	7.50	
Spain Ptas	862.50	825.50	
Sweden Kr	12.58	11.38	
Switzerland F	2.51	2.32	
Turkey Lira	805.400	180.000	
USA \$	1.715	1.685	

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Sir Robert Horton yesterday pledged to produce a railway second to none from the £4 million a day investment programme

Railtrack plans £16bn investment programme

BY JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RAILTRACK yesterday committed itself to a £16 billion programme of investment in Britain's railways over the next ten years — the equivalent to £4 million a day — after being criticised for neglecting the system since privatisation.

Sir Robert Horton, chairman of Railtrack, pledged himself to producing a railway that was "second to none" as he unveiled the company's ten-year network management system.

Railtrack shares rose 1½p to 422½p yesterday, a new high. They were offered at 190p to private investors in May 1996.

The programme involves about £5.7 billion being spent on maintaining the network in its current condition and about £10.2 billion on up-

grading and modernisation. The programme will involve the overhaul of about 2,500 km of rail and 1,300 bridges as well as showpiece projects such as the £1.5 billion West Coast Main Line upgrade and the £600 million Thameslink 2000 project.

More than 2,000 stations will also benefit, with 49 stations having more than £1 million spent on them and four — Paddington, Waterloo, Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central — receiving £25 million or more of investment.

The publication of the document comes after criticism of the company's early investment record from John Swift, the Rail Regulator, who accused it of "wholly unacceptable" levels of spending.

Sir Robert conceded yesterday that "it has taken us longer than we expected" to get investment programmes moving but that by the end of March, the company would have overruled the regulator's target and by 2001 spent £1 billion more than the regulator's demands.

John Edmonds, chief executive of Railtrack said the station repairs programme was on the brink of being launched, and that there would be "several hundred stations clad in scaffolding very soon".

Senior company executives said Railtrack would be spending between £900 a year on renewing the railway infrastructure compared with be-

tween £400 million and £500 million under British Rail.

The announcement was welcomed by the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, the main passenger watchdog, but attacked by unions and Save Our Railways, the rail lobby group, as "a sham".

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the RMT rail workers' union, said Railtrack's plans fell far short of the figures needed to clear the backlog of spending. Andrew Smith, the Shadow Transport Secretary, urged the Rail Regulator to go through the proposals with "a fine tooth comb to make sure Railtrack deliver on their investment promises".

Tempus, page 26

Receivers called in at Scottish Pride

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SCOTTISH PRIDE, the milk processing company spun off from the Scottish Milk Marketing Board, was put into receivership yesterday owing around £30 million.

Blair Nimmo, the receiver, of KPMG, said the company, which employs nearly 800 people and is 80 per cent owned by Scottish dairy farmers, had been affected by the loss of two contracts with the Kwik Save and Sainsbury supermarkets.

"The intention is to trade the business on and sell it as a going concern," Mr Nimmo said. Staff will all be paid this month and he hopes to keep any job cuts to a minimum. Long delays in talks with Robert Wiseman Daicid, a would-be buyer of Scottish Pride's fresh milk business, because of disagreements over conditions laid down by the Office of Fair Trading, added to the group's troubles.

Shares in Scottish Pride, which has struggled in difficult market conditions since its spin-off in 1994, were suspended on the Alternative Investment Market yesterday at 42½p. Its two trading companies have been put into receivership, while the holding company is unaffected but has almost no assets.

Wiseman, whose offer to buy Scottish Pride's fresh milk business was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission last year, said that, despite two months of talks with the Office of Fair Trading, they had not been able to agree a compromise over the demand that the company regularly supplies its prices to the OFT for possible publication. "It would be too commercially sensitive," said William Keane, Wiseman's finance director. However, he hoped that a compromise could be reached and that the acquisition could be completed.

Tempus, page 26

MP and Halifax in exchange over Bill

DOUGLAS FRENCH, the campaigning MP and chairman of the all-party Commons Building Society Group, yesterday stepped up the pressure on the Halifax to honour the spirit of his Building Societies (Distribution) Bill when it becomes a £10 billion bank this summer. Mr French's Bill would help the elderly, widows and the disabled, whose accounts are held in trust, to receive ex-gratia bonus payments on conversion. In a curt exchange of letters yesterday Mr French said the society could issue an "unambiguous" statement of intent to follow the spirit of his Bill.

The Halifax said it had received legal advice that such a move would mean recalling and re-issuing the transfer documents and lead to a delay of at least a year. The society added that to alter the bonus system now, as Mr French proposed, could mean lower payouts than the proposed average of £1,300.

Factors bought by FNB

FIRST NATIONAL BANK (FNB), Abbey National's finance house subsidiary, has bought County Factors of Poole, its third acquisition since May last year. County provides factoring and invoice discounting services to small companies. It has £2 million in assets and in the last financial year saw pre-tax profits rise 20 per cent to £646,000. FNB would not disclose how much it had paid. Last year it entered the car finance market with the acquisitions of the Wagon Finance Group and Eltham Holdings.

Easynet loss grows

EASYNET, the Internet service group that raised £2.6 million in its AIM flotation in March, plunged deeper into the red with 1996 losses of £971,000 before tax, compared with £107,500 in the previous year. Acquisition of Savilion Internet and UK Online and expansion into France caused a fourfold increase in administrative expenses to £2.7 million, matched by a 400 per cent rise in the number of customers to 17,000. Losses were 6.34p a share (2.8p loss). The shares, rising since the signing an Internet deal with Microsoft in September, improved a further 4p to 66½p.

German rates frozen

THE Bundesbank yesterday left German interest rates unchanged, unsurprising news after the central bank said M3 money supply had grown strongly in January and the highly regarded IFO economics institute showed business confidence rising. The discount rate was left at 2.5 per cent after the bank's regular fortnightly council meeting and the Lombard rate was unchanged at 4.5 per cent. The key repurchase rate was left at 3 per cent. M3 money supply grew at an annualised 11.7 per cent, faster than expected.

Economic View, page 27

Ramsdens raises cash

HARRY RAMSDENS, the fish and chip shop chain, has raised £1.5 million via a share placing to fund expansion. The company expects to open ten restaurants this year, expanding the existing chain of 21 outlets in Britain and overseas. The placing coincides with the opening of the company's restaurant in Singapore and its second in Dublin. The shares were placed with institutional investors at 344p each. Existing shares rose 2½p to 347½p.

Pension progress slow

MORE than £80 million in compensation and costs has been offered to more than 10,000 people who have been mis-sold personal pensions, according to figures from the Personal Investment Authority, the regulator. This still means that more than 550,000 victims of mis-selling are yet to be compensated. The total compensation and costs bill could top £4 billion. The PIA hoped that changes in the review process announced at the end of last year would begin to speed up the process.

Accounts win awards

THE 1997 annual awards for published reports and accounts have been won by Kingfisher, the retailing group, and Hodder Headline, publishers. Their accounts were praised by the judges as examples of best practice in corporate reporting. But the overall state of corporate reporting in the UK was criticised by Nigel Macdonald, the Ernst & Young partner who chaired the judging panel. He complained of frequent "unsubstantiated optimism and flannel".

Chiquita \$50m in red

CHIKUITA Brands International, hurt by the costs of flood damage to its Central American banana plantations, lost \$87.5 million in the fourth quarter of 1996, nearly double the company's \$46.8 million loss in the last quarter of 1995. The net loss for all of 1996 was \$50.6 million, compared with a profit of \$9.2 million for 1995. The 1996 results included fourth-quarter costs of \$58.3 million for flooding in Guatemala and Honduras.

US court notice lifts GKN

SHARES of GKN recovered 22p to 935½p yesterday after the UK automotive components manufacturer said there may be a significant reduction in the \$347 million damages awarded against the company by a North Carolina jury.

GKN said the US District Court in Charlotte, North Carolina, has issued a notice concerning the likely nature of its resolution of certain matters in the so-called Meineke case that may lead to a reduction of 30 per cent in damages.

Last December a jury awarded \$347 million in damages against GKN for allegedly defrauding franchise operators of its Meineke discount mufflers. Last week it was reported that lawyers have filed for compensation of \$740 million. The parties have been directed by the court to agree a formula for allocating the damages. GKN said the outcome would not affect the 1996 dividend.

Shepperton owners put flotation in their script

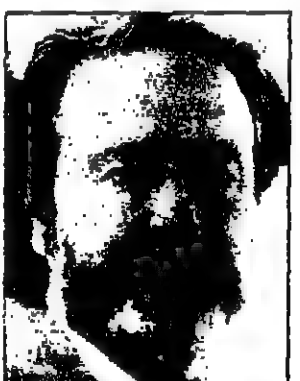
BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE historic Shepperton film studios, which became the home of British comedy films in the Fifties and Sixties, will be floated on the stock market within the next two years.

Ridley Scott, who bought the studios with his brother, Tony, for £12 million, said that the company would be ready for flotation "in a couple of years or slightly under a couple of years".

A spokesman for the British-born brothers, who are among the world's leading film directors, confirmed that the studio would be floated, but would give no other details.

The flotation would make the 65-year-old studios, recently used for productions of *Sense and Sensibility* and *101 Dalmatians*, the only major studio in Britain to operate as



Ridley Scott: investment

a public company. The brothers have invested an estimated £8 million in the studios, adding stages, offices and land.

They have also acquired 20 acres of land next to the site for the construction of exterior sets, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*, the film

industry magazine. It is understood that they now plan to invest nearly £6 million more on post-production facilities by the end of this year.

The investment is in line with their stated aim, when they bought the studios in September 1994, of making Shepperton one of the leading post-production centres in Europe.

In 1996, Shepperton made an operating profit of £2.9 million on revenues of £11.2 million. The studios are also used for commercials and television shows.

More than 600 feature films, including *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, have been made at Shepperton, west of London. Working Title's *The Borrowers* has just finished filming there. A film version of the classic television series *Lost in Space* will go into production next month.

Tempus, page 26

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□ Brown at the EMU Olympics □ Rank brings the curtain down □ Scottish Amicable ignores its true owners

Labour stays firmly on the fence

□ GORDON BROWN yesterday gave a firm commitment on any future Labour government's policy on British membership of the European Monetary Union.

There, that should have set a few hearts beating faster at Labour Central Office. Mr Brown did nothing of the kind, of course. A tangible commitment is not the right move at this stage in the electoral game, on any subject. What Mr Brown accomplished was yet another Olympic-level performance in political fence-sitting.

In a speech in Washington he listed the conditions Labour would look at before deciding if Britain should join EMU. Half militate against such a move, half seem to encourage it. As with Labour's views on a wind-fall tax on utilities, the eventual policy can therefore be justified whichever way it goes.

If all are applied, the five economic conditions would seem to suggest the 1999 target date for joining EMU will not be met. This plays well with the prevailing political climate, and the practicalities. Anyone who believes that the main players are all in any fit state to hit this deadline is living in another economic galaxy. Germany should, Italy won't, for example. The irony is that the public sector borrowing figures on Tuesday suggest that Britain may have

less difficulty than most. Let us list Labour's five-part test. Members of EMU should ideally not be at different stages in the economic cycle. This is an argument against EMU, in that they always are: one of the strongest arguments against union is that it prevents interest rates and other economic levers being set at different levels across the community in response to local conditions.

Labour's second test relates to this. There must be enough flexibility to respond to any economic problems that arise. Logically, another anti-

Britain, would have to be certain that employment here would not suffer. Set aside the social chapter for a second, and higher business costs, and orthodox arguments on EMU suggest that British jobs would be lost if we stay out — 25 million at risk, according to the CBI. A pro, therefore. There would likewise have to be no negative impact on inward investment — another pro, in that a Britain outside should be less attractive to Far East or American manufacturers looking to sell within Europe.

Except that both those last two tests can be argued the other way. The social chapter might put jobs at risk, while it might equally repel outside investors.

Labour's fifth test is equally two-headed. There must be no damage to the British financial services industry. You can argue that if we do not join, business will shift from the City to Frankfurt or wherever. Or you could say that a City positioned offshore from monetary union would be ideally placed as a go-between with the outside world. It could cut both ways; nobody really knows. As ever with EMU, nobody really knows.

Gong with the wind

□ ANOTHER famous image from Britain's film history heads for the dustbin. The figure that strikes the Rank gong — first played by Bombardier Billy Wells in 1935 — was created in a more innocent age to represent the melding of sound with a "perfect physical specimen". Like other bits of Rank's back-cat-



alogue, such as the Carry On films, the dear old Bombardier seems to have had its day.

But Rank's decision to pull out of films was announced on the same day that Ridley and Tony Scott, the film director brothers behind such as *Blade Runner* and *Top Gun*, said they were preparing to film the Shepperton film studios that they bought two years ago. The Oscar nominations, meanwhile, point to continuing British critical success, while Polygram is proving that non-Hollywood studios can make money.

The British film industry is in one of its regular periods of revival. The independent sector led by production companies such as Working Title and

Revolution are proving that the British can make films that are successful internationally on a budget that in Hollywood would hardly pay for the key grip.

Rank is pulling out of films because companies such as First Leisure and Carlton are hinting that they may be prepared to take the medium seriously and buy the business. The revival of the multiplex, the continuing popularity of videos and the proliferation of television channels has actually increased the number of outlets desperate for decent movies.

Any buyer will, however, still have to convince a deeply sceptical City that has lost money before. Rank pulled out because, as Andrew Teare, chief executive, says, he cannot justify risking shareholders' money.

This mentality pervades the institutions, which do not understand film-making with its complex cross-funding and large risk element. Shareholders prefer the burns-on-seats approach that epitomises the rest of Rank's businesses. But Rank's multiplexes still need blockbusters to pull in punters. Perhaps a more

daring man might have been able to persuade its shareholders that a revived Rank film business could help plug the gap.

A question of trust

□ THE trouble with stuffing wish-lists to Father Christmas up the chimney is that the people who actually pay for your presents may not be able to afford them all. Scottish Amicable's statement of principles to be used to identify the best bid should be equally irrelevant. It should be up to the potential bidders, the Abbey National, GE Capital, the Prudential and whoever else, to decide what they can afford.

The danger with ScotAm's 14-point list of conditions is that it may obscure the real deciding factor, price. Admittedly, the price offered and the impact on the with-profit fund are high up the list. But the insurer's insistence on deciding which bid will succeed in a huddle with advisers means that the people who own the business, the with-profit

policyholders, will not be consulted, but, instead, presented with a fait accompli.

ScotAm has always seemed to take the view that its ownership is a matter too arcane and too difficult to be left to the owners. This explains the palpable sense of shock when the management's earlier, and with hindsight wholly inadequate, proposals were blown out of the water by the Abbey.

It is only in the strange world of mutual insurers, controlled by trustees on behalf of the members, that such a state of affairs could exist. The arguments in favour of demutualisation are a long way from overwhelming, but the stance being taken by ScotAm's managers provides one of the strongest.

Deng's legacy

□ THE reaction in the Far East to the death of Deng Xiaoping illustrates the first rule of market-making, which is that forecasters always get it wrong. The Last Emperor's death would send shares tumbling like skittles, we were told. So the wise money on such volatile markets sold well ahead of the event. His death was therefore a non-event, and indeed a buying opportunity because the uncertainty was lifted. Did anyone really think the immortal leader would live forever?

IMI set to shed 670 jobs

By OLIVER AUGUST

IMI, the international engineering group, is set to shed 670 jobs at its Yorkshire Alloys subsidiary, which faces closure after growing losses.

Consultations with unions are under way but workers in Leeds and Sandwell, West Midlands, could find themselves on the dole within 90 days. Barry Pointon, executive director, said: "We are obviously mindful of how the people in these localities will be affected by the closures. We will be trying to find alternative employment within the group to the extent that it is practicable."

IMI investigated the potential for restructuring and tried to sell Yorkshire Alloys but failed. Mr Pointon said: "We have looked at all other possibilities, but unfortunately nothing came about."

IMI said, the company had experienced difficult trading conditions and lost £19 million over the past five years.

Costs from the closure were expected to be around £25 million, which will be included as an exceptional item in the results for the year to December 31, due to be published on March 10.

Rank shares surge on hopes of buy-back

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE PROSPECT of a further share buy-back and optimism over the coming year helped Rank Group reverse a long decline in its share price (see Pennington, this page).

Shares in the leisure company jumped 27p to 442p after Rank strongly hinted it would use part of the proceeds from the sale of its 20 per cent stake in Rank Xerox.

Rank has already said it will ask for permission to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares, valued at £360 million, at its annual meeting in April.

Andrew Teare, chief executive, said the company would look at the buy-back option again when it had completed the sale of the stake, which is expected to raise up to £1 billion. He added that Rank had resolved most of the tax problems surrounding the sale and would begin discussions with Xerox over a buyout soon.

Rank also confirmed that it is putting its film distribution unit up for sale, adding that it had received several expres-

sions of interest. The unit is valued at about £75 million. Rank unveiled a fall in profits, before tax and exceptional items, from £408 million to £297 million. The results were complicated by a change in accounting procedures and the sale of part of its stake in Rank Xerox.

On a like-for-like basis, profits increased by 6 per cent. Exceptional charges totalled £232 million because of restructuring costs and write-downs on the sale of businesses. Overall turnover rose 9 per cent to £2.1 billion.

The company said it was looking to open ten Hard Rock Cafe sites this year, having completed the acquisition of the brand for £300 million. The restaurant chain increased profits by 12 per cent to £46 million, with the new cafes adding £8 million to profits.

The leisure division lifted profits by 10 per cent to £92 million, buoyed by a good performance from its Mecca bingo clubs. Rank said admissions at the clubs rose by 10 per cent in the second half with operating profits also rising sharply.

Odeon cinemas had a record year, boosted by hits such as *Toy Story* and *Independence Day* and the Tom Cobligh pub chain, bought last year, performed well.

The film and entertainment services division increased profits by 24 per cent to £86 million. But profits in the holiday division slipped from £67 million to £66 million.

The company's share of profits from Universal City, the US theme park, rose to £14 million. Rank also received £49 million in gross dividends from Rank Xerox, against £38 million last year.

The total dividend rises 8 per cent to 17p. A final 12p is payable on April 23.



Sir Gordon Brunton, chairman of Verity, left, and Farid Azima, chief executive

Verity plans new speaker venture

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

VERITY, the loudspeaker maker, is aiming to raise £8.65 million through an open offer to pay off debts and fund production of flat-panel hi-fi speakers using its NKT technology.

It has signed up NEC, the Japanese electronics company, as the first NKT licence holder and reached an agreement with Sir Norman Foster's architectural and design practice to collaborate on the technology's possible applications in buildings.

Some of the money raised will go to Mission, the Verity subsidiary, so that it can produce the first NKT flat hi-fi speakers. Farid Azima, chief executive, said he was in licensing talks with more than 20 other companies.

The switching of resources to NKT was chiefly responsible for a pre-tax loss of £1.03 million (£1.54 million profit) in the six months to December 31. The interim loss per share is 0.6p (0.5p eps). The company is not paying an interim dividend.

Extra tests delay eczema treatment

By PAUL DORMAN

PHYTOPHARM, a company trying to develop medicines based on traditional herbal remedies, suffered a setback yesterday when it revealed that UK regulators want more information before they are prepared to approve its most promising product.

The stance taken by the UK's Medicines Control Agency will delay the launch of ZemaPhyte, a treatment for severe eczema, by 18 months or more. Phytopharm said that it will now be the last quarter of 1998 before it has the results of the additional tests demanded by the MCA.

Shares in Phytopharm fell by 23p to 185p, cutting its market value by £7 million to about £57 million.

Richard Dixey, the company's chief executive, said the news was a positive develop-

ment, in spite of the delay. Dr Dixey said he was "absolutely confident that this is not a long farewell" — that the MCA remains genuinely interested in ZemaPhyte. He added: "I am sitting on £8.5 million [of shares] here, and if I thought it was a long farewell I would not be spending [more money] on ZemaPhyte."

The MCA wants Phytopharm to exercise stricter quality control over the ten Chinese plants that are used to make ZemaPhyte. The MCA also wants more information about the mix of chemicals that go into the product.

Phytopharm has decided to shelve plans to build its own £2 million manufacturing plant in Huntingdon.

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ScotAm sets a bid timetable

By ANNE ASHWORTH

SCOTTISH AMICABLE, the beleaguered mutual insurer, declined yesterday to comment on rumours that it is in talks with GE Capital Services, over a possible capital injection. Sandy Stewart, Scottish Amicable's chairman, remained tightlipped over this latest development in the complex struggle for control of the company (see Pennington, this page).

GE Capital, a subsidiary of the American industrial giant General Electric, also declined to comment on the speculation. GE Capital provides finance for companies in the aircraft, auto and property businesses.

A joint venture with GE Capital would resemble the original demutualisation proposals put forward by Scottish Amicable. These relied on "substantial financial backing" from Swiss Re, the reinsurance group, and its affiliate

Securitas Capital. This much-criticised plan was shelved when both the Abbey National and the Prudential launched takeover bids. They were followed by six other companies, including AMF, the Australian insurance company, and Fortis, a Dutch insurer.

Yesterday, Scottish Amicable said the outcome of discussions would be known by mid-March, and all bidders must table firm proposals by February 28. The board will recommend one offer to the 1.1 million with-profit policyholders who own the company. The board detailed 14 criteria by which it will judge bids.

Mr Stewart said he was opposed to the independent review of all bids requested by Scam, the Scottish Amicable policyholder pressure group. "Such a review would usurp the role of the board,"

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THE TIMES DILLONS CRIME FORUM

The art of crime writing

TWO of Britain's leading crime novelists, Minette Walters and Colin Dexter, will discuss the art of crime writing at a Times/Dillons Forum at 7.30pm on Tuesday, March 4, at the Institute of Education, London WC1. The audience will also have a chance to question the authors.

Dexter's books are worldwide bestsellers, and his Inspector Morse television series topped the ratings with 18 million viewers. Minette Walters has also had television success with *The Sculptress*, which will be followed in May by *The Ice House*.

The admission price includes £2 off the price of Walters's new novel *The Echo* (£16.99) and £1 off Dexter's *Death is Now My Neighbour* (£9.99), both published by Macmillan. For full details of how to book, see coupon (below).

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Shadows take centre stage

LABOUR'S assiduous courting of the City has paid off handsomely. Tony Blair, David Blunkett, and Margaret Beckett were all at this week's Investors in People awards dinner, sponsored among others by Imro, NatWest and the Corporation of London.

The Opposition picked up a commendation for best presentation and won the innovation award for originality, flair and success. Yet amid the cries of "bravo" and air kissing there was hardly a Conservative MP, let alone a minister in sight. Is this a sign of what's to come?

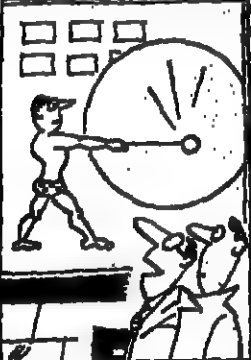
Catarina wheel

A FETCHING member of the Leigh-Pemberton clan, frolicking in a straw-filled wheelbarrow? Surely not. Flicking through this week's issue of *Country Life*, an eye-catching picture of the former Governor's daughter-in-law catches my eye. Married to Robin's son, James, managing director, equity markets at CS First Boston, Catarina is a full-time mother of three. Posing in the extensive grounds of the couple's manor house in Kent, Catarina is dressed head to toe in Loewe, nestled lovingly next to her favourite horse "Jacko".

Divorce hotline

THE latest company perk? Free divorce advice. Bosses are dredging their coffers for lawyers to guide employees through marital break-ups and domestic disputes. The first scheme of its kind in the country is being offered by Bristol-based Law Express. A seven-day legal hotline is made available for anyone from the cleaner to the manager; companies pay according to the number of calls made to the firm.

JOB CENTRE



"I hear they have several thousand Rank vacancies"

Chips are down

A QUARTER of a million pommes frittes were consumed at Asda stores across the country yesterday. To celebrate National Chip week and its successful "Chip Crusade", the supermarket chain invited customers to take part in a complimentary tasting session. Asda launched its chip crusade last month, to bring down the price of the frozen variety after manufacturers failed to pass on savings from plummeting potato prices to customers. Within a week of chopping the price of all its chips in its freezers to the same level, manufacturers were forced to cut theirs too.

Corking idea

CITY epicureans gathered at Eton's The Minster this week to celebrate the wine bar's fifth birthday. A free lunch being a thing of the past, the assembled party were required to dig deep in their pockets, and raised £500 for London Lodge School for handicapped children. Steve Upot, a trader at Barclays Metal, bid £140 to spend a day's work experience with host Chris "Chubb" Haynes; not a bad investment considering the champagne that Haynes consumes. A more sober Upot tells me "I'll be travelling for the next two weeks."

MORAG PRESTON

ECONOMIC VIEW

JANET BUSH

Talk of delaying economic and monetary union is premature

Euro-diplomacy is probably geared more to detaching Italy than unhinging EMU itself

There is an irony in the fact that the financial markets, so often cast in the role of objective realists, apparently remain blissfully confident that a broad economic and monetary union is on track, but Europe's politicians, so often tainted by vainglory and wish-fulfilment, have started to doubt whether the single currency is now feasible on deadline.

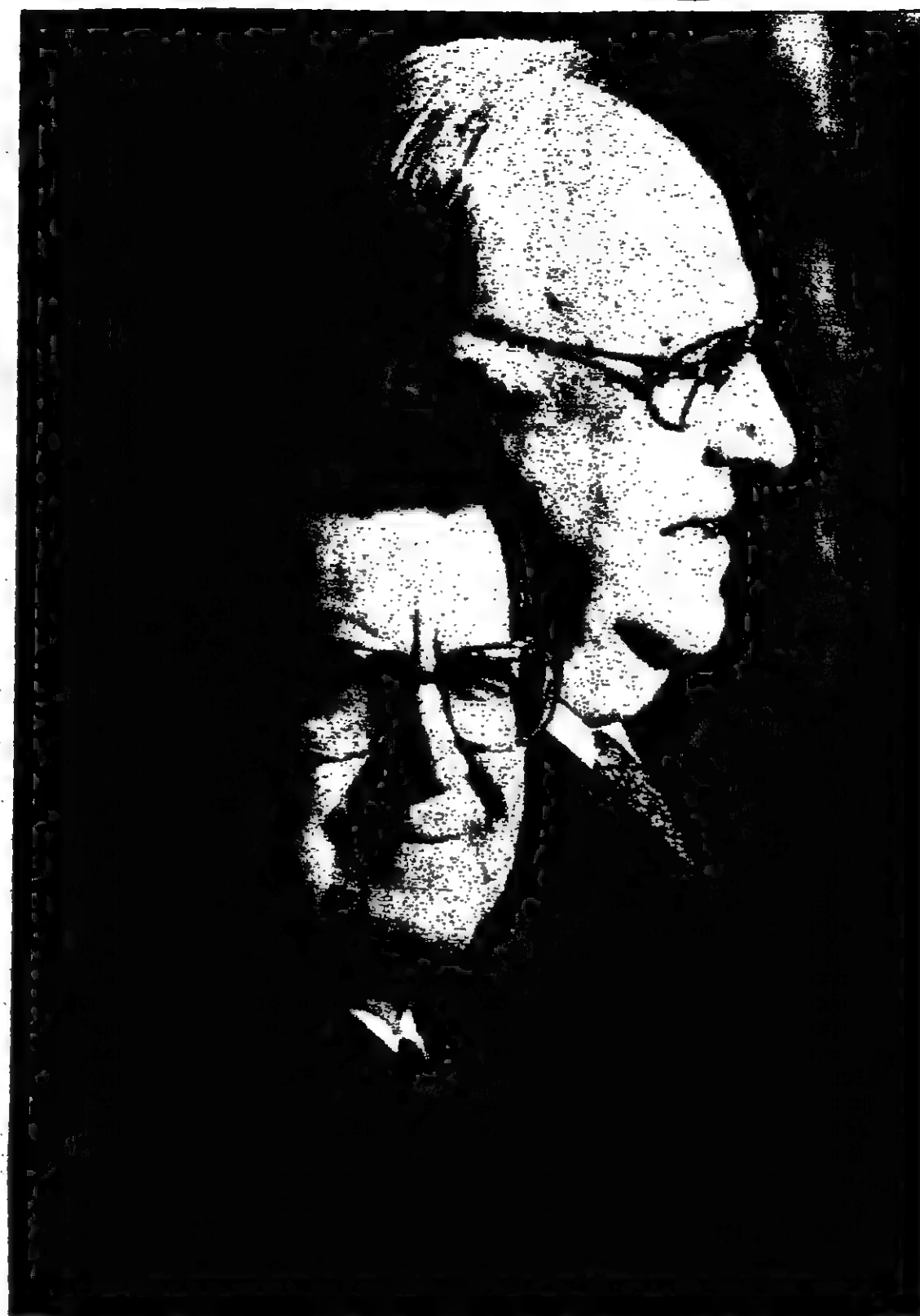
Talk of delay has suddenly become common currency in Germany, where it matters most. Partly because of the ambiguous stance of Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, towards running in the October 1998 elections, all the major political players have started jockeying for position more than 18 months in advance and the question of the single currency is the one that most exercises them.

Given that German opinion polls show a big majority against giving up the mark, this is hardly surprising. In spite of this, there was cross-party support for monetary union until recently, but there is now some doubt about which way major political figures will jump on the issue.

The triggers for this outbreak of genuine uncertainty are the Italian Question and the German Problem, which are heavily inter-related. Italy, led by Romano Prodi, has manoeuvred itself into a highly public position at the centre of the single currency debate and is proving a major embarrassment for Germany. Like a star-struck schoolchild from a lower class who attaches himself to a sixth-form prefect, Italy is deemed difficult to shake off, but the effort dominates current German thinking.

For there is one thing that German politicians of all colours are united on and that is that voters will not wear a monetary union in 1999 that includes the lira and so hopelessly compromises the mighty mark and its thoroughly converged northern European satellites. And yet, thus far, Germany has been outwitted by Italy with the help of France. The die was cast in November when Italy persuaded its parliament to call the European monetary committee meeting that led to its re-entry into the exchange-rate mechanism. Once that meeting was called, and France made it known that it favoured Italy being invited into the race towards the single currency, it was inconceivable that Germany could keep it out without provoking major turbulence in the markets. Once Italy rejoined the ERM, it became a highly visible candidate for monetary union.

Now Germany is working furiously to find a formula that would keep Italy out of the first wave. The most obvious way to ensure this is to demand strict adherence to the Maastricht treaty's convergence criteria, which Italy would surely fail to do. But this strategy means, of course, that Germany also has to



Romano Prodi, forefront, Italy's Prime Minister, is providing problems for Helmut Kohl

meet those criteria and meet them unambiguously, without creative accounting. Now enter the German problem: last month's rise in unemployment to 4.7 million, the highest level endured since the 1930s. That, opposition Social Democrats were quick to point out, blows a huge hole — DM10 billion according to some — in this year's budget calculations. The Government's own estimate for the deficit in this Maastricht test year is 2.9 per cent, perilously close to the treaty's upper limit.

Jürgen Stark, Germany's Deputy Finance Minister, insisted after Monday's meeting of European finance ministers in Brussels that 2.9 per cent was a "carefully calculated figure in which we have already considered all

recognisable risks". For good measure, he added that his government would take further corrective measures to combat any further falls in tax revenues. One such widely discussed was a public spending freeze for the third year in succession, but, by Tuesday, Germany's ruling coalition had ruled this out "for the time being". Increasing industrial and social unrest is not something with which Germany's leaders feel comfortable and tightening the fiscal screws further, to qualify for a single currency that most Germans do not want, is not an attractive option. But, for the time being, the alternative of delaying monetary union, is even less palatable and it is probably still perfectly possible for Germany to

meet its deficit target — if it wants to. But does it want to? The best guess is that Germany would love to go ahead if it could be sure that the single currency's membership comprised the core that is already clustered around the mark and that the euro so created would come up to the standard demanded by the German public and its champion of sound money in Frankfurt.

Anything less is anathema, hence current dark mutterings about secret meetings to plan for delay, talk of strategies already in place to introduce the idea gently to the currency and bond markets. One veteran watcher of the French political scene had lunch last week with some senior French officials. They aroused his

suspicions that something was afoot simply because they had never, in his experience, said so little. The rumour mill is grinding along well.

It is certainly the case that Europe's central bankers, the constituency most worried about a fudged EMU, are discussing game-plans for delay, and one strand of current opinion has it that a postponement could be announced within months. But even in the current atmosphere of doubt, this still seems somewhat far-fetched, not least because Europe's politicians fear that they wouldn't be able to manage the fallout from a delay announcement. Many are scared that delay would be tantamount to giving up on the single currency project, perhaps for a decade or more, partly because the markets would not be convinced that a one-year postponement really meant one year. And political considerations make delay unattractive. Unlike Britain, which believes in its bones that this silly single currency nonsense could be put aside so that all effort could be concentrated on important matters such as EU enlargement, Brussels and many European capitals see the single currency as the politically unifying force on which the rest of the European programme depends.

And even if delay is on the cards, announcing it now appears to be bad tactics. On the political front, as Alison Cottrell, of PaineWebber, points out, the ink has hardly dried on tough 1997 budgets. Are Europe's governments really prepared to go to their electorates at this point, saying that they have crippled their economies to qualify but the single currency isn't going to happen after all? Such a U-turn would dwarf sterling's sojourn in the ERM as a source of pointless economic pain. How much better, for example, to wait until November and use the European Monetary Institute's report on which countries make the grade as the excuse to delay. Central bankers have broad enough shoulders — in their own interests — to take the blame.

Another argument against an early delay announcement is the fear that it would be seen as a sign of weakness. It would be a sign that the currency's membership comprised the core that is already clustered around the mark and that the euro so created would come up to the standard demanded by the German public and its champion of sound money in Frankfurt.

On balance, current talk of delay is most likely being used as a stick to beat potential members of monetary union into reinforcing their convergence efforts rather than being seen as a genuine short-term option. And European diplomacy is probably geared more to detaching Italy than unhinging monetary union itself. Correction: In last week's Economic View I wrongly stated that Britain's inflation between 1988 and 1996 averaged 2.96 per cent — the same as in Germany and lower than in America. Britain's average for this period was actually 4.6 per cent, much higher than either of these countries. The error arose because I read the wrong line in an OECD table, showing figures for Canada instead of Britain. It remains true that Britain has a long record of financial stability, but I should not have over-egged the argument — Anatole Kaletsky

Tested by turtles, a tenor and a train

Well-known figures in the business world confess their errors of misjudgment to Morag Preston



Sir Peter Parker, left, Anita Roddick and Frank Warren readily admit mistakes



small paper-making factory in Nepal under the wing of her beauty emporium. Enticed by the factory's environmental ethics and its contribution within its fragile community, nobody stopped to consider whether customers would want to buy their recycled paper from the same shop they bought rhubarb-scented shampoo. "It's easy to say 'find other outlets', but it was hard for the young man in charge," sighs Roddick.

Neville Abraham, the chairman and chief executive of

Chez Gerard, the London restaurant group that this week splashed out £1.6 million on a trendy new fish eatery, is a management consultant by trade. In 1980, he and his partner, Laurence Isaacson, neither of whom had any catering experience, opened Le Café des Amis du Vin, a successful French bistro in London.

Six months later, their accountant warned them that, thanks to light-fingered staff, they were £60,000 in debt. "When you're very busy, you

don't watch what happens to the food, the drink, or the money," says Abraham. Some stories are easier to dine out on than others, however. Sir Peter Parker was not quite as comfortable reliving the horror of "Queasy Rider". The confession from the former BR chairman whose high-profile launch of the Advanced Passenger Train completely backfired is not quite as digestible. Despite concerns over the train's design, Sir Peter invited VIPs to board Britain's answer to the TGV on its three maiden

voyages. The first passengers complained of travel sickness, snow stopped the second train in its tracks, and the third journey ground to a halt only eight minutes after its departure. Government support was withdrawn, and the train now plays host to children's parties in Crewe. And Sir Peter's new motto? "It's always better to be second in business, and let the pioneers take the punishment."

Lynne Franks lines up alongside the high-profile city faces to tell her story of shame. The Duchess of PR tells how she was invited to chair Vivat, hailed as Britain's revolutionary radio station for women. Eye-catching posters spread across London, and the launch alone caused quite a stir. Then Katie Turner, managing director, decided to paint Vivat offices pink, much to Franks's disgust. A male voice reading the radio station's premier news bulletin was the final straw. Franks now says that she became embarrassed by an editorial policy that ignored the female perspective.

It was the success of pizza-eating turtles that figures in the mind of the head of Hasbro UK. Twenty years in toys was not long enough to make Bryan Ellis jump at the opportunity to buy the toy rights to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It took him less than nine minutes to turn down an offer for the animated amphibians that was im-

mediately snapped up by a rival company, and went on to make them a fortune. "Kids were going mad for it," rues Ellis. "Are you surprised I haven't fled the country?" But, like most of his contemporaries who appear in the series, Ellis continued with missionary zeal, and years later was responsible for the profitable relaunch of Action Man.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Why UK lags in technology

From Mr Charles Ross
Sir, Bill Gates draws attention to the paucity of computer software being created in the UK and the absence of venture capital compared to the US (*Business News*, February 4).

The reason is fundamental. New technological products usually come from new enterprises. Established companies rarely innovate. In the US people wishing to start businesses communicate direct with the public to finance their ambitions and their dreams. By contrast UK legislation requires an intermediary, such as a "City" institution, or bank to "authorise" every prospectus (*Financial Services Act 1986*, section 57).

They have a duty of care, so are loath to risk their reputations by putting their names to innovative or novel projects. Software development requires quite modest sums of capital, which is uneconomic for them to handle.

This legislation has crippled the commercial development of Britain's inventiveness since it was first enacted to protect the public from the great depression in the Thirties. Nobody disputes that backing young entrepreneurs like Bill Gates, and novel products and services like software involves high risks. There are many small losses but some spectacular returns.

However, the British love to gamble. The highest in the land patronise horse racing. The Bank finances the PSBR with premium bonds. This Government is very proud of starting the National Lottery — yet, we the public are "protected" from investing in the future businesses that will generate the wealth to keep the UK in the first rank of nations in the technological revolution.

The first computers in the world broke enemy codes at Bletchley Park in 1941. Nowadays we own no hardware manufacturer and not one single world-class software supplier. This is not a coincidence. Until we repeal our antiquated, restrictive legislation we will continue to lose out in one technology after another. Yours faithfully, CHARLES ROSS, Chairman, The SILLABLE Corporation, Mulberry House, 8 Mount Road, Lansdown, Bath.

Layers of hidden agendas on EMU

From Mr Jon Greaves
Sir, Anthony Harris (January 15) looks for hidden agendas in EMU. I suspect there is no need to look very far. I am quite certain Germany will annex our North Sea oil in the name of a common European resource within days of signing a treaty.

The Great Game has moved to our doorstep and there is layer upon layer of hidden agendas and things they are not telling us.

I am also constantly amazed how often the Government prefers to take the flak for unpopular measures imposed upon us by the EU rather than confess it has relinquished its choice in the matter. Yours faithfully, JON GREAVES, Goddellows, Tilty, Great Dunmow, Essex

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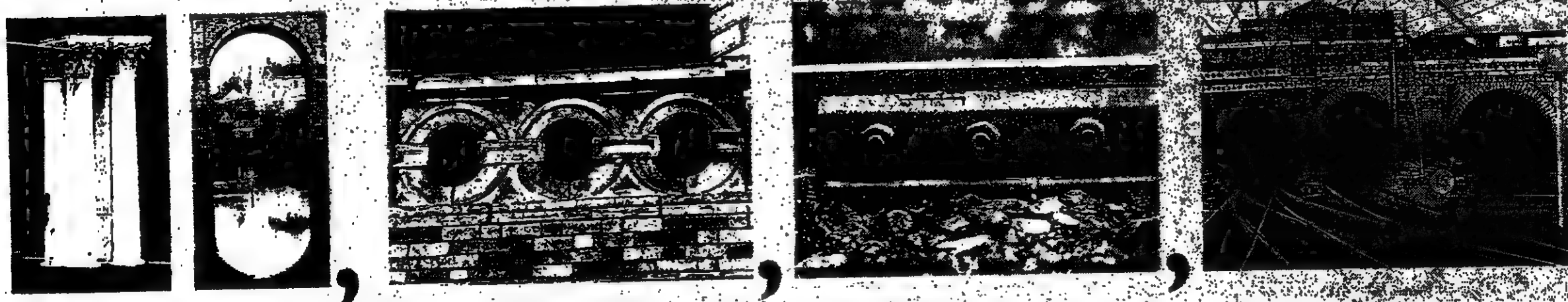
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Army contracts out non-military operations at Aldershot

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A PRIVATE consortium was awarded a £200 million contract yesterday to take over the management of all non-military operations at Aldershot garrison, the home of the British Army.

Primary Management, which has estimated it can save the Army £34 million in running costs over seven years, beat two other competitors, including an in-house team from Ministry of Defence civilian and Service personnel.

The contract is the largest to be awarded by the Army under the MoD's "competing for quality" initiative, in which the ministry's non-core support

functions are open to competition in the private sector.

The Army decided that Primary Management, the facilities management arm of Gardner Merchant, offered the best value for money. The decision was endorsed by Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister.

A spokesman for the Army at Aldershot said the consortium would run all the support functions, including accommodation services, stores management, transport, office and secretarial support, catering services, mess management, cleaning, laundry, tailoring and even primary health care. The consortium will also be responsible for the garrison's power station. The transport and maintenance

Primary Management expects deal will save Army £34m running costs over seven years

element of the contract will involve leasing about 270 cars, vans and trucks, and maintaining some 190 combat service support vehicles.

Although some of these functions are already performed by the private sector, the Army said the new deal would release uniformed personnel for soldiering duties. The contract will run for seven years.

The Aldershot garrison in Hampshire which occupies four square miles, currently has about 5,400 soldiers, 1,300 civil

servants and 6,000 dependants. A further 3,000-4,000 soldiers go to Aldershot each month for training courses.

Primary Management's partners are WS Atkins, the United Kingdom's largest engineering and construction consultancy, and Lex Transflex, a joint venture between Lex Service and Lombard North Central. The consortium was advised by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Before the takeover, there will be consultations with the trades unions and

after a phased implementation programme, the private consortium will be fully in charge of the support services at Aldershot by October.

The main areas that currently involve MoD employed civilian staff are transport, office and secretarial support and accommodation services. The majority of them will transfer to the contractor's workforce and their existing terms and conditions of employment will remain unchanged.

Garry Hawkes, chairman of Gardner Merchant, said: "Our experience in working with the Armed Forces is an important asset and we are happy to be able to build on this strength over the next seven years at Aldershot."



Tailoring will be one service provided

Warehouse company to double in size

By MARTIN BARROW

GRANTCHESTER Holdings, the retail warehousing company that came to the stock market by way of a demerger from Burford Holdings in November, will more than double its size through property acquisitions worth a total of £121 million, it was announced yesterday.

The biggest purchase comprises a portfolio of seven retail warehouses that will be acquired from J Sainsbury Developments at a cost of £73.3 million.

Grantchester is also buying two schemes in Scotland under development by Morrison Construction Group for £23.1 mil-

lion and has agreed to pay an aggregate £25.4 million for developments in Huddersfield and Middlesbrough.

The acquisitions will be part-funded via a £65 million rights issue, underwritten by BZW. Investors are offered seven new shares for every ten held at 137p each. Yesterday the shares rose 1p to 162½p, having increased from 130p on flotation.

The company is expanding in one of the fastest growing sectors of the property market. There is a shortage of high-quality retail warehousing space at a time when demand from major supermarket chains is accelerating.

With superstore sales forecast to rise by more than 40 per cent, 25-year leases are routinely commanded and initial yields are often less than 6 per cent.

These latest deals mean that Grantchester will have trebled the value of its flotation and doubled the number of units to 100.

Paul Wright, chairman of Grantchester, said: "These transactions will give Grantchester a substantial presence in one of the fastest growing sectors in the property market." He added that the pace of Grantchester's expansion was notable, given the competition from other property investment companies seeking to expand in the sector and the shortage of new developments.

The Sainsbury portfolio will comprise about 394,000 sq ft of space. Pre-lets on most of the units have been exchanged or are under offer. Tenants include Homebase, Courts, Toys 'R' Us, ScottishPower, Pet City, Comet and JJB Sports.

After the rights issue, trusts representing the interests of Mr Wright and Nick Hewson, who is chief executive and finance director, will hold 15.6 per cent of the enlarged share capital.

Burford, which held 24 per cent after demerger, will see its holding fall to 14.6 per cent. The balance of the payment will be funded with new banking facilities of up to £45.8 million and from existing resources.

Times, page 26



Paul Wright, chairman of Grantchester Holdings, left, and Nick Hewson, chief executive

EMU 'will improve credit ratings'

By ADAM JONES

ECONOMIC and monetary Union in Europe (EMU) will improve the credit rating of some of the debt issued by member states and institutions, according to Moody's Investors Service, the credit rating agency.

The agency said it sees only a small chance of delay to the planned 1999 starting date. It anticipates eight countries joining in the first wave.

Ireland and Finland are among likely first-wave members that would benefit. Bonds issued by them in a non-European currency would be upgraded to prime Aaa status.

David Levey, co-head of Moody's sovereign risk unit, said the tight fiscal constraints imposed by countries in the run-up to EMU would also improve ratings.

He said: "We have already started to factor in the long-term implications of EMU."

Mr Levey also said governments who change existing debt into euros from their own currency would not be seen as defaulting.

Despite the upgrades, a member country's creditworthiness when issuing euro-denominated debt would be no different to the rating for debt previously issued in its own currency.

And most of the countries Moody's sees as likely first-wave members - Germany, France, Austria, The Netherlands and Luxembourg - already have across-the-board prime Aaa ratings.

Scottish Mutual to pay £160m bonuses

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

SCOTTISH MUTUAL announced yesterday it would pay £160 million of bonuses to its 624,000 with-profit policyholders. Graham Pottinger, chief executive, said most bonus rates would be maintained, helped by smaller costs and an 81 per cent rise in new business premiums last year.

In line with the industry, the company has cut terminal bonuses, reducing payouts on long-term maturing policies. It has held bonus rates for 'untitled life with-profits' policies at 7.5 per cent for the

fourth year running, but has cut pension annual bonuses 0.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent.

The company's 195,000 conventional with-profit holders, who get the bulk of the payout, saw annual bonuses on sum assured and additional bonuses stay at 2.25 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively. For a male non-smoker aged 29, 10-year endowment payouts slipped to £10,891 but on mature 25-year contracts fell 3.9 per cent to £105,288. Maturities on with-profits personal pensions fell around 4 per cent.

US given incentive to pay fund debts

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

EUROPEAN and Japanese donors to a World Bank fund that lends to 79 poor countries are to allow American businesses to bid on \$1 billion worth of contracts if Congress approves the payment of money the US owes.

The International Development Association (IDA) lends money to countries with a per capita annual income of less than \$905 for development projects, including agriculture, health, education and road building.

Non-US donors decided

last year that the United States should sit on the sidelines for one year while a \$3 billion trust fund to finance IDA loans for fiscal 1997 was set up. The stop-gap fund was needed because a proposal to lend \$22 billion to poor countries over three years starting last July could not proceed until the US contribution was certain. The Europeans and Japanese said US companies could not bid on the development projects because their Government had not paid its arrears.

Company collapses continue to decline

COMPANY bankruptcies and liquidations continued to fall last year, although at a slower rate than in 1995, according to figures published by KPMG. Last year, more than 35,000 companies folded as a result of bankruptcy and voluntary or compulsory liquidation. Bankruptcies fell by just 0.6 per cent to 21,803, with the total number of liquidations falling 4.9 per cent to 13,600, of which 5,080 were compulsory.

Mike Wheeler, KPMG's UK head of corporate recovery, said the figures were encouraging and predicted further falls during 1997, helped by low inflation and "an ever-increasing 'feel-good' factor". But he added: "It is too soon to say whether these conditions will lead to significant reductions. No matter what the state of the economy there will always be businesses which fail. If an organisation cannot recognise and adapt to a changing economy, it will not survive."

Arcon in the black

ARCON, the zinc mining company based in Kilkenny in the Republic of Ireland, yesterday reported its first annual pre-tax profit. The move into the black by the six-year-old company resulted from a £421,000 settlement of claims against Columbia Gas, giving Arcon pre-tax profits of £124,000 for the year to August 31. The company incurred a loss of £1,475,000 in the previous year. Arcon expects to ship the first load of zinc/lead concentrate from its Galmoy mine within four weeks.

Investor's happy returns

SWEDEN'S Investor, the key holding company in the Wallenberg family's financial empire, said the total return for its shareholders rose 60 per cent last year. This compared to an average increase of only 43 per cent on the Stockholm Stock Exchange. Pre-tax profits rose to 9.60 billion crowns (£807 million) from SKr3.05 billion a year earlier. Net assets value rose to SKr78.88 billion, from SKr50.07 billion. Investor is lifting the dividend to SKr10 from SKr9.

Hanny jobs for Ireland

HANNY HOLDINGS, a Hong Kong manufacturer of compact discs, is to invest £16.3 million in a new factory in Northern Ireland, creating 150 jobs. Hanny has entered into a joint venture with Ritek, a Taiwanese CD manufacturer, to create Multimedia Info-Tech to produce recordable compact discs and digital versatile discs at the factory on the Springbank Industrial estate in west Belfast. The Industrial Development Board is providing £4.3 million in support.

PC sales growth forecast

JAPAN'S top makers of personal computers yesterday forecast robust sales growth for the next business year given strong worldwide demand. NEC Corp, Japan's largest PC maker, expects sales of its personal computers to rise 20 per cent and it sees similar worldwide growth in demand for PCs and related products in 1997-98. Toshiba Corp aims to lift PC sales to more than ¥1 trillion (about £5 billion) in fiscal 1997-98 from a projected ¥730 billion for the current year.

VFG valued at £5.7m

VFG, the broadcast video, film and grip equipment hire and sales company, will be capitalised at £5.7 million when its shares begin trading on the Alternative Investment Market next Thursday. The company is coming to the stock market by way of a placing of shares at 40p each, raising £3 million before expenses. In the year to the end of November, the company earned profits of £281,000 before tax and exceptional items, an increase of 75 per cent over the previous year.

Carisbrooke tops £1m

CARISBROOKE Shipping, which operates out of the Isle of Wight, achieved a rise in pre-tax profits to £1.02 million (£922,926) last year. Earnings were 10.88p (10.76p) a share. The final dividend is 2.5p a share, making a total of 3.5p, an increase of 75 per cent over the previous year. The company, which raised £2 million via a flotation on the Alternative Investment Market in June, said trading conditions were still tough. Carisbrooke shares fell 7p to 90½p.

Celtic Energy plan

CELTIC ENERGY is in discussion with Eastern Group about jointly developing a 350-megawatt power station at Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. The power station would utilise 850,000 tons of Welsh coal annually, much of it produced at Celtic Energy's own open-cast sites. Planning permission would be sought this year, with construction due to begin in 1998. The project would create 600 construction jobs during the three-year development, and power generation would begin in 2001.

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Drive to target program pirates

By FRASER NELSON

DISGRUNTLED workers travelling home on the London Underground are being targeted by an advertising campaign encouraging them to inform on employers who use pirated computer programs.

The Business Software Alliance, which represents a consortium of worldwide software houses, is offering a £2,500 reward for information that could lead to a successful raid on businesses.

The advertisements, scheduled to run in every Northern Line carriage until May, show a man whispering into a phone beside the slogan, "£2,500 if you blow the whistle".

The Northern Line — dubbed the "miserable line" by its regular users — was chosen because of its concentration of computer employees. The Northern Line runs through the City of London and branches out into the Covent Garden area, which the alliance is particularly keen to target.

A spokesman said: "The campaign will definitely catch the attention of people going to work, and more importantly, on their way back from work."

The alliance says that two in every five computer programs used by businesses is pirated, costing the industry about £287 million a year. Britain is ranked as the world's seventh worst offender in software piracy.

While programs such as Microsoft Word cost some £600 in the shops, it can be copied in seconds on a floppy disc, which costs 70p. Windows-based computer systems have made programs increasingly easy to copy.

Since its hotline was set up last May, more than 900 calls have been made, providing 200 leads. This enabled the alliance to take action against 70 companies, and collect settlements of more than £100,000.



Howard Bell, left, will become chief executive, while John Van Kuffeler will take on the role of executive chairman at the next annual meeting

Provident Financial looks to acquisition trail for growth

By MARIANNE CURPHEN

PROVIDENT FINANCIAL, the home credit company, yesterday announced increased pre-tax profits of 17 per cent to £118.5 million for the year to December 31 and said that it would continue to consider growth by acquisition. The company also hinted at a possible share buyback as a way to improve shareholder value.

At the same time, it was

announced that Anthony Warde-Norbury would retire as chairman at the next annual meeting. John van Kuffeler, currently deputy chairman and chief executive, will take up the position of executive chairman. Howard Bell, currently group managing director, will become chief executive.

Provident Financial makes small, unsecured loans of an average £500 to £400 to low-earning households and uses

9,650 agents to collect the payments on a weekly basis. It has more than 40 per cent of the market and analysts have questioned what it will do with its growing balance sheet.

Mr van Kuffeler said he believed the clearing banks would continue to avoid involvement in the target market that Provident deals with.

Earnings rose 16 per cent to 29.3p a share and there will be a final dividend of 10p, making the total dividend for

the year 16.5p (14p). The home credit division increased its pre-tax profit 21 per cent, from £91.9 million to £111.4 million. That marked the fifth year of strong growth at the division. The number of customers grew 9.5 per cent, from 1.2 million to 1.3 million, during the year.

However, fierce competition in the motor insurance market meant that pre-tax profits fell £2.7 million to £10.6 million (£13.3 million).

The company is a specialist insurer for female drivers, second cars and non-comprehensive cover for older vehicles.

Provident said that it had been determined to protect margins and had therefore increased premiums over the year. However, this led to a drop in the number of motor policyholders, from 802,000 to 595,000, over the 12-month period.

Overall, this reduction, plus a policy of changing to lower risk, lower premium drivers, meant written premiums fell 33 per cent.

Provident Financial has begun a restructuring programme to cut down on the heavy costs associated with home collection.

The traditional branch network has now largely been replaced by regional administration centres, and administration of credit is being separated from the management of agents.

Bunzl pays AFC \$72m for bonded fibres

By OLIVER AUGUST

BUNZL, the paper and plastics group, has acquired the bonded fibres business of American Filtrona (AFC) for \$72.45 million in cash.

Anthony Haggood, Bunzl chairman, said: "The acquisition of the bonded fibre business of AFC will greatly strengthen our US operations both in filters and in ink reservoirs. Utilising the Filtrona name worldwide will reduce confusion in the market and enable us further to build this successful business."

AFC was bought from WBT Holdings LLC, a company owned by several trusts for the benefit of members of the family of the late Walter Bunzl.

The bonded fibres business, which is principally engaged in the manufacture of cigarette filters and ink reservoirs, had sales of \$72.8 million and made operating

profits of \$8.9 million in 1996. Bunzl expects its acquisition to enhance earnings in its first full year of ownership, with the profits contribution from the purchase outstripping the interest that would have accrued if the money had stayed in the bank, according to John Bason, finance director.

Profits of \$8.9 million in 1996. Bunzl expects its acquisition to enhance earnings in its first full year of ownership, with the profits contribution from the purchase outstripping the interest that would have accrued if the money had stayed in the bank, according to John Bason, finance director.

New Medical plans float to finance safety syringe

By ERIC REGULY

A SCOTTISH company that has designed a syringe to reduce the risk of the accidental transmission of hepatitis B and HIV will announce its intention today to raise as much as £15 million in a stock market flotation.

New Medical Technology wants to use about half the funds to build a factory in Scotland to produce the Zero-Stik, aimed at the growing market for safety syringes.

Parmure Gordon, the company's financial adviser and stockbroker, expects New Medical's shares to be listed on the Alternative Investment Market by April.

The chief feature of the Zero-Stik is a spring-loaded needle that automatically disengages and shoots into the body of the plunger once the plunger is fully depressed.

Other safety syringes either require the user to pull a plastic sheath over the exposed needle, or snap it off and place it inside the used syringe for protection. One popular product requires five separate steps to render it safe.

Researchers have estimated that the American market for safety syringes will expand from the current 25 per cent to 80 per cent by 2001. The global market for disposable syringes, including intravenous catheters, is valued at US\$3 billion a year.

In North America and Europe, needlestick injuries are said to cause several hundred cases of hepatitis B and HIV a year. The US Food and Drug Administration is under pressure to require safety features on all syringes.

The Zero-Stik was invented by a Scottish engineer who wants to remain anonymous. He is an investor in New Medical and will be given royalties on the sales. New Medical was formed in 1994 by Gerry McGroarty, the commercial director, to exploit the technology.

John Campbell, now chief executive, joined a year ago and helped to raise about £1.25 million from private investors.

most of them Scottish, to develop the Zero-Stik. Patent applications have been filed in 45 countries.

New Medical realises the product will be a hard sell unless it is priced cheaply. The list price for safety syringes ranges from about US\$0.35 to US\$0.65 against US\$0.15 or less for a standard version. The company would not reveal the Zero-Stik's expected list price.

If the flotation succeeds, New Medical will begin automated production of the Zero-Stik by the end of next year. The factory will employ up to 100. Production will be licensed to other manufacturers depending on the popularity of the product.

Abbott link lifts Shield shares

By PAUL DURMAN

SHIELD Diagnostics, the small Dundee company that is developing a revolutionary test for heart disease, yesterday announced a link-up with Abbott Laboratories, believed to be the world's biggest medical device group.

Shield's share price, which had already doubled in the past two weeks, jumped another 80p, to close at a high of 416p.

The deal with Abbott Diagnostics will give Shield access to Abbott's instruments, reagents and training. However, Shield's City supporters believe the Abbott deal may prove to be much more significant for the future of its test for Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time (APTT), the blood clotting agent that is believed to be a good predictor of the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Erling Refsum, a Yamaichi analyst, said: "This announcement must mean that Abbott wants something that Shield has — and it's got to be big, otherwise Abbott would not be interested. AFT is the only big thing."

The results of three studies on the AFT test are expected this year. AFT is believed to be a better indicator of heart disease than cholesterol tests. With more than 500 million cholesterol tests conducted each year, the market is potentially huge.

CompuServe in the red

FROM REUTERS IN COLUMBUS

COMPUSEVE CORP., the world's second largest online service where Robert Massey, chief executive, resigned earlier this week, reported a fiscal third-quarter loss and said it would focus on returning to profitability as it cuts costs and realigns its business structure.

The company also reported a decline in membership in CSI, its flagship service, but said there were improvements

in membership in other areas. CompuServe said it lost \$14.2 million, or 15 cents a share, in its third quarter ended January 31, compared with a \$17.2 million profit, a year ago. Revenues rose to \$211 million (\$203 million).

Frank Salizzoni, CompuServe's chairman and acting chief executive until a replacement for Mr Massey can be found, said: "While our third quarter results show improve-

ment over the second quarter, they are clearly not good enough. Our No. 1 priority is to stabilise earnings and return to profitability as quickly as possible."

CompuServe said subscribers to its CSI online service were down at the end of the quarter by 100,000 to 2.8 million, with most of the decline taking place in America. Its US subscribers dropped 140,000 to 1.6 million.

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1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES							
1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
BANKS							
BREWERIES, PUBS & RESTAURANTS							
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS							
ENGINEERING VEHICLES							
FOOD MANUFACTURERS							
BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION							
ELECTRICITY							
ELECTRONIC & ELECT							
HEALTHCARE							
HOUSEHOLD GOODS							
ENGINEERING							
INSURANCE							
CHEMICALS							
DISTRIBUTORS							

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
LEISURE & HOTELS							
MINING							
PROPERTY							
TELECOMMUNICATIONS							
TEXTILES & APPAREL							
TRANSPORT							
RETAILERS FOOD							
RETAILERS GENERAL							
WATER							
ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET							

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
PHARMACEUTICALS							
SUPPORT SERVICES							
PRINTING & PAPER							
PROPERTY							
TELECOMMUNICATIONS							
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1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
BRITISH FUNDS							
SHORTS (under 5 years)							
LONGS (over 15 years)							
UNDATED							
INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation at:							
MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)							

Abbon link lifts Shield shares

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■ VISUAL ART
Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Tate can go ahead with plans to create a Gallery of British Art



■ THEATRE
Ralph Fiennes leads a brilliant revival of Chekhov's *Ivanov* that should rescue the play from obscurity

THE TIMES ARTS



■ CONCERT 1
Esa-Pekka Salonen illuminates the music of György Ligeti to a packed Queen Elizabeth Hall...



■ CONCERT 2
... while Mikhail Pletnev and the Russian National Orchestra get it only partly right in Manchester

British and proud of it

Sir Henry Tate's gift of his paintings and a building to house them (the nucleus of the present Tate Gallery) opened in 1897 as the National Gallery of British Art. In 1916, partly because of a reluctance on the part of the National Gallery to display contemporary art, international modern art was added to the Tate's brief. Because the two collections have grown to the point where only 15 per cent of the works can be displayed at any one time, a decision was taken recently to separate them onto different sites.

From the moment it was announced that Bankside Power Station in Southwark was to be converted to house the Tate Gallery's international modern collection, there has been a question-mark hanging over the future of the buildings at Millbank and the collection of British art.

Now, with the news that the Heritage Lottery Fund has earmarked £18.75 million for Millbank's conversion into the Tate Gallery of British Art, the plans for its future have been made public. The Tate is left to raise a further £4.5 million to meet the total cost of £31 million, but Nicholas Serota, the gallery's director, is confident that the funds will be found and that, as planning consent has been given, work will begin this year and be completed by 2001.

"The Bankside split only carries on the two strands of the collection," says Serota. "However, there is a fear that

VISUAL ART:
Isabel Carlisle
talks to the
Tate's director
about the new
Millbank plans

when the exciting masters of the 20th century leave Millbank, the British collection might turn out to be predictable and dull. The challenge is to turn the greatest collection of British art in the world into something even more exciting than at present."

Serota is reluctant to define his role in the new scheme of things, saying that it is under discussion with the trustees, but it seems almost certain that he will be in overall charge. "A director will be appointed for Bankside and one for Millbank. Those people will be responsible for the exhibitions and displays. My responsibility will be to encourage those two people and resolve disputes about which works go where," he says.

Serota believes the key to keeping the British art collection alive and interesting is loan exhibitions and changing displays of the permanent collection. Although the history will be roughly chronological within the four quadrants of the Millbank site, and major artists such as Stubbs, Ho-

garth, Whistler, Spencer, Bacon and Hockney will always have a body of work on show, Serota's intention is that "displays will be rotated to bring in different emphases at different times."

"We might borrow Old Master paintings from the National Gallery to show how they relate to British art. Or a display of British sculpture in the 1920s and 1930s might include foreign artists to make the point about artists working in an international context. We don't want to give the impression that British artists worked in isolation."

The Turner Prize display of work by leading contemporary British artists will continue at Millbank, and British sculptors will be asked to create work for the central Duveen galleries. "The juxtaposition of old and new will continue, and we will be able to show a much higher proportion of the favourite works that people want to see," says Serota. With gallery space increased by 35 per cent, large works such as James Ward's *Goredale* will be put back on show. A permanent Blake gallery will be created, and works on paper will be shown in smaller galleries within each quadrant — a real innovation for the Tate, that up to now has shown very little of its large collection of prints and drawings.

In addition, Serota wants to see exhibitions that explore the relationships between British,

continental and American art. "I would like to do a small show on Gertrude's visit to England and his influence on British art — his *Gift of the Medusa* was shown in London and Dublin. We are also planning to do a major exhibition on mid- and late-19th-century American land-

scape painting. It was very much influenced by British art and there has never been a show on the American sublime before.

"Smaller, monographic shows on artists such as Samuel Palmer, William Orpen or Thomas Jones would make up one series, as would

exhibitions of modern masters such as Lucian Freud portraits or Francis Bacon landscapes." Meanwhile, the major historical exhibitions continue with *Rossetti, Burne-Jones and the Symbolists*, opening in the autumn, and *Sargent in 1908*. Serota dismisses the idea that British art seen in isolation

might fall into the second rank in an imaginary international art league, and points to the influence of changing taste on how we view particular artists. "Forty years ago the Pre-Raphaelites were not considered of world importance, but they are currently being shown in a major exhibition of

Victorian art in Washington, and in the last 30 years British art has been more highly regarded than French art. The purpose of the new Tate Gallery of British Art is to show that art made in this country has been and still is as extraordinary and interesting as art made abroad."



Nicholas Serota in the Gainsborough and Turner room at the Tate: "We will be able to show a much higher proportion of the favourite works"

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale on Chekhov's *Ivanov*

Fine Russian disarray

TWO years ago Ralph Fiennes played Hamlet for the Almeida Theatre Company, giving a performance that most found sensitive and strong but a grudging few thought not tormented enough. As if to answer that criticism, he is now successfully tackling the eponymous protagonist of Chekhov's *Ivanov*, a debt-ridden landowner who accuses himself of behaving like a desperate malcontent, an anguished ditherer — or, as he adds with a ringing sneer, a Hamlet.

Chekhov wrote *Ivanov* nine years before *The Seagull* and regarded it as an apprentice piece. Others have attacked its moments of melodrama and caricature. But David Hare's terse, punchy translation and Jonathan Kent's pacy, finely cast Almeida production should convince you that the play is a vivid portrait of a Russia in moral disarray and, partly as a result, a decent man in spiritual chaos.

Imagine the story as it might have been dramatised by a lesser talent. *Ivanov* cynically marries a rich Jew's daughter and, when her parents cut her off, contemptuously turns his attention to a rich



Torment: Ralph Fiennes

money-lender's daughter, ignoring his wife as she dies of TB. That is exactly how Chekhov's first stage doctor, Coln Tierney's thin Robespierian Lvov, sees the landowner's behaviour. But Lvov is a fool, for he ignores Chekhov's prime axiom: people are always complex, and situations are never black and white.

Fiennes's *Ivanov* certainly suggests that. Once he was a bustling idealist, forever reforming farms and schools, and now here he is, burnt out at the age of 35. He neglects

his wife, his estate and himself, and he doesn't know why. All he feels is a numb shame and guilt punctuated by moments of bewildered rage. And Fiennes catches it all: the hunched, bunched body-language of torpor, the bursts of self-loathing and, at one moment, a display of cruelty way beyond Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia in the nunnery scene. Why is he like this? He, we and perhaps even Chekhov don't and can't fully know.

One reason, though, must be the enmeshment of an outback where the main diversions are cards, drink, talking money, back-biting and spreading scandal. Yet the reptile house does contain characters that good actors manage to round out. There's Harriet Walter as *Ivanov*'s wife, smiling through her grief. Oliver Ford Davies as a cynical uncle, Rosemary McHale as a lady Scrooge and Bill Paterson as her nervous husband. They were funny, touching, and real enough to leave me feeling that, like just about everybody else, I had badly underestimated *Ivanov*.

● This review appeared in later editions of *The Times* yesterday. *Ivanov* is presented in partnership with AT&T.

CONCERTS: Ligeti joins the greats in London; plus a game of two halves in Manchester

Evidently, the word had got around that the Philharmonia's Ligeti series, *Clocks and Clouds*, is not to be missed. At the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Wednesday night they were turning people away from another imaginatively planned concert juxtaposing Ligeti with music by Ravel and Bartók.

The programme worked well, not only because Ravel's preoccupation with colour and texture was mirrored a few decades later by Ligeti, but also because one of the linchpins of the series, Esa-Pekka Salonen, brings as much illumination to the scores of Bartók as he does to those of Ligeti.

Two Ligeti scores were heard: the Violin Concerto from 1969 and *Ramifications* from 1968-69. Although written two decades apart, both concern themselves with the creation of elaborate texture from microscopic detail, and both do so by manipulation of the standard "equal temperament" (by which G sharp, for example, equals A flat). In the concerto, an orchestral violinist and violist each tune their instruments to harmonics on the double bass; the intonation that results, combined with the frequent use of harmonics, opens up a shadowy, occult world. The effect is enhanced by the use of slide whistles

Colours in the clouds

(played by two percussionists) and ocarinas (four players rising to their feet to deliver some eerie tones), whose deliberately imprecise intonation adds a further element of unpredictability.

Frank Peter Zimmermann seemed to enter completely into this world, not least in his intense solo in the fourth movement, *Passacaglia*. But his command of conventional tuning was equally impressive in the multiple stopping of the final cadenza.

With regard to the harmonies resulting from comparable techniques in *Ramifications*, Ligeti himself put it unforgettably: "They smell high; the music is starting to decompose." Salonen and the string players of the Philharmonia achieved this decadent, neurotically refined effect in vivid style.

likely to inspire a return invitation than Barry's *Flamboy*. Described innocently by the composer as "a sequence of chorales, waltzes and hornpipes", it is nothing of the kind; an arid opening duet for bassoon and trumpet is followed by even more arid piledriver unisons on full orchestra.

This unpleasantness out of the way, another national tuning was brought on in the form of Barry Douglas, whose account of Beethoven's

Piano Concerto No 4 in G major, with the orchestra under its principal conductor, Kasper de Roo, was unexceptionable, but also unexceptional. Douglas produced some nicely shaded phrasing in the first movement and some expressively withdrawn playing in the second, but not everything was on this level. Presumably this is not unfamiliar repertoire for the orchestra, but there was a cautiousness about it that failed to strike the sparks Douglas needed.

That caution was evident, too, in Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*. The positive aspect of this is that one got a strong sense of players and conductor nosing forward together, testing the waters, and often finding fresh solutions to stylistic problems. On the other hand, there were occasions where one felt that they were just keeping up with the tide, rather than sailing with it.

The *Lullaby* and *Princess's Round Dance*, however, brought some sensitive playing, as did Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye* Suite.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Fair and foul play

THE conductor and orchestra playing in the second half of the concert in Bridgewater Hall looked much the same as the conductor and orchestra which had played in the first half. But, surely, no one ensemble could be so brilliant in Tchaikovsky and so tedious in Beethoven?

With musicians as sophisticated as Mikhail Pletnev and the Russian National Orchestra there was a hope that the gulf between Vienna and Moscow or St Petersburg would not be quite so blatantly yawning. It was clear from the performance of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony that they can play perfectly together and in tune. But in the slow introduction to *Leonora No 3* they didn't. From the Tchaikovsky we know that the conductor has a sensitivity to atmosphere and a feeling for high drama. But in the Beethoven there was none of that. Nikolai Lugansky, soloist in the same composer's Piano Concerto in C minor, had little chance of finding inspiration in such circumstances and although his playing was both accomplished and truthful, it was only as interesting as its accompaniment.

Russian NO/Pletnev Manchester

The extraordinary thing about the second half of the concert was that even the encores were presented with more style and commitment than the RNO's young conductor had seemed prepared to dedicate to Beethoven. A technique like his needs elder-statesman authority or, in its absence, some equivalent of the kind he brought to the interpretation of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. Pletnev was little more demonstrative about it even here, but the first movement was as seductive in its presentation as it was chilling in its effect. It was so beautifully accomplished that the other three movements could scarcely sustain the same level of intensity. Even so, after an Andantino that was a little hurried and a Scherzo too conscious of the excellence of the pizzicato strings, the *Finale* was so appropriately liberated of good taste that there could be no argument with it.

GERALD LARNER

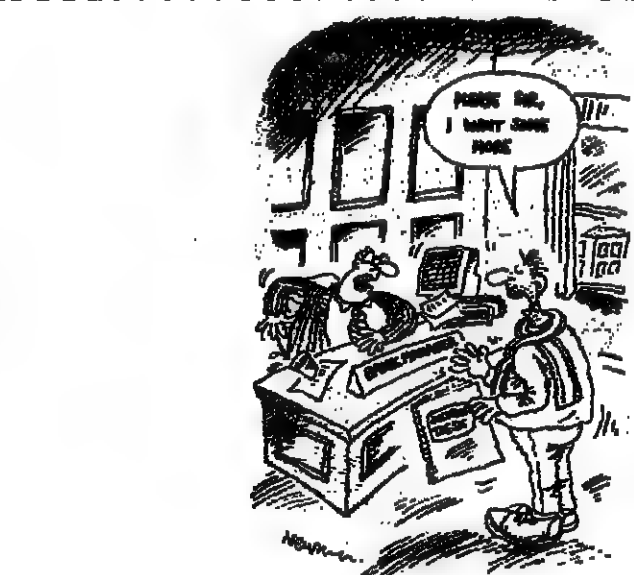
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A wonderful recording debut, *Beautiful Freak*, marks Eels out as a breed apart from most US bands



POP 3

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THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 4

The California rapper Warren G delivers a stylish, well-manicured menace on his new album



POP 5

The man known as White Town reveals himself to be an artist well-schooled in the lo-fi song tradition

Electric music for mind and body

POP ALBUMS:

David Sinclair
on a lo-fi classic
by Eels, and
some high
energy from Orb

EELS

Beautiful Freak
Dreamworld/MCA
(DRD 50001 £15.49)
TOO many American groups have been indulging in an orgy of noisy navel-gazing for too long. Thankfully, although Eels can be loud and their lyrics have an introspective slant, their wonderful debut, *Beautiful Freak*, marks them out as a breed apart.

The trio come from Echo Park, Los Angeles, a bohemian neighbourhood with its fair share of urban blight, as depicted by the song *Susan's House* in which singer and songwriter E catalogues a series of shocking street vignettes with a sad but unblinking eye. In other songs he explores the thoughts and feelings of the outsider, never more acutely so than on *Guest List*, in which he cleverly turns the situation of being excluded from the privileged circle of freeloaders at a pig into a metaphor for broader feelings of social rejection.

But the predictable heavy rock arrangements and self-indulgent tone that have been the base of so much American music in recent years are entirely absent, replaced instead by the marvellously dreamy chord sequences and left-field instrumental textures of *Not Ready Yet* and *Nowhere* for the *Soul* and by words which combine a weary sense of alienation with a dry, melancholy wit.

"When I came into this world they slapped me/And every day since then I'm slapped again," E sings in



"A sense of wonder and adventure, stimulating a voyage of the imagination that more earthbound music never could": Orb have lift-off to *Orblivion*

Flower, but caps off his reverie with a steady vow of: "You see, I know I'm gonna win."

Eels are going to win too; friends, admiration, perhaps riches beyond belief and most certainly love for a record that does the precise opposite of numbing the soul.

ORB
Orblivion
(Island 524 347 £15.49)

NOT since the era of the Shadows and the Tornados have mainstream tastes been so attuned to the charms of instrumental music. But, thanks to acts such as Orb, the re-education process has gone

far beyond accepting the absence of lyric and voice and into realms of impressionism that have effectively redefined the concept of popular music. Mundane conventions such as key or time signatures could only be ascribed in a fairly loose sense, if at all, to most of the pieces on *Orblivion*, with the obvious exception of the eminently danceable hit, *Toygene*. And

yet the scurrying sound collages that comprise numbers such as *Asylum* and *Ubiquity*, with their spacey, dub sound effects and electronic percussion patterns that sound like

rocks tumbling down a hillside, have a repetitive structure every bit as nagging, in their way, as a conventional verse/chorus melody and chord sequence.

A more accessible collection than previous albums, *Orblivion* retains a sense of wonder and adventure, stimulating a voyage of the imagination that more earthbound music never could.

WARREN G
Take a Look Over Your Shoulder (Reality)
(Def Jam/Mercury 533 484 £15.99)

HAVING defined his own era, no less, with the massively successful debut album, *Regulate... G Funk Era*, Californian rapper Warren G has carved a niche for himself in the singles chart with his rap

adaptations of the pop standards, *What's Love Got to do With It* and *I Shot the Sheriff*. A shrewd operator with a rare talent for running with both the hare and the hounds, he tucks these two tracks safely out of the way at the end of his follow-up album, *Take a Look Over Your Shoulder (Reality)*, lest they disturb the mood of well-manicured menace conjured by more typical numbers such as *Young Gun* and *What We Go Through*.

With an ear for melody and groove as keen as his instinct for survival, he remains one stylishly sinister dude.

WHITE TOWN
Women In Technology
(Chrysalis/EMI 7243 8 56129 £15.49)

WHILE it might seem as if Jodi Mishra (the man who prefers to be known as White Town) stumbled into his home-studio-recorded No.1 single, *Your Woman*, his album reveals an artist schooled in a lo-fi tradition of songwriting that stretches from Babybird to the Human League. That said, there is a certain hesitancy to several of the performances on *Women In Technology* which rather detracts from the appeal of more straightforward songs such as *Going Nowhere* and *A Week Next June*. He is at his best when he takes more chances, as when he adds scratchy effects and a twist of Indian influences to *Thursday at the Blue Note* and steals the bass line from the Animals hit *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* to create an eerie, moonlit soundscape on the intriguingly titled *The Function of the Orgasm*.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- (1) Blur (Food)
- (2) Spice Girls (Virgin)
- (3) White on Blonde (Mercury)
- (4) The Smurfs Hits 97 - Vol 1 (Smurfs (EMI TV)
- (5) Evita (Original Soundtrack (Warner Bros)
- (6) Attack of the Grey Lantern (Marsden (Parlophone)
- (7) Tragic Kingdom (No Doubt (Interscope)
- (8) Blue Is the Colour (Beautiful South (Goi Discs)
- (9) Ocean Drive (Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)
- (10) Glow (Rae (Sony SP)

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Figure in brackets denotes last week's position

Blur could manage it for only one week, likewise White Town, LL Cool J and U2. These days, getting to No.1 in the singles charts seems to be easy — I'm planning to do it myself next week — but staying there is another matter. In the olden days, when pop stars talked about bringing down the stock market rather than flexing themselves on it, singles had a long and active life. Born into the lower fifties, a single would work hard at bettering itself over a number of weeks, hitting the Top 40 in adolescence, the Top Ten in prime child-bearing years, partying all the way to No.1 and staying long enough to introduce itself to everyone before gently numbing towards retirement.

These days, however, the singles chart has become febrile and frantic, like speeded-up film of the night sky, with each star just a white, one-week streak, and everything in

Make my single a cheap day return

constant movement. A case in point would be Blur's *Beesbum*. It entered the chart at No.1, slipped to No.7 the following week, and dropped to 17 the week after — the quickest slide ever recorded by any single debuting at the top.

This rapid turnover is due to several factors, the main one being marketing. In order to ensure a high entry point, CD singles retail for 99p in the first week of sale, before reverting to the more usual £3.99. As only somebody with jam for brains would pay four times as much as they need to for a couple of songs, the majority of sales take place in the first week of release. As a result, we've seen the rise of "in with a bullet, out with a lead weight attached to its

ankles" singles.

Within the industry none of this really matters that much. No one makes money from singles, which are seen as glorified, glamorous trailers for the albums from which they come. And, provided you can slap that all-important "Featuring the No.1 smash hit..." sticker on the front, it doesn't matter how much of a smash it was.

However, the industry still moans. Brief sojourns in the charts are seen as part of a greater malaise — the continuing decline in record sales. This is mainly due to the absence of reliable old war-

horses who shift records whatever the climate. Phil Collins, R.E.M. and the rest of the old-school crew have weathered the mid-1990s rather badly and, as yet, there are no tried-and-tested super-sellers to replace them. The three big names of last year — Spice Girls, Oasis and Alanis Morissette — are all still very early on in their careers, and the market is too uncertain to ensure their continuing sales over, say, a decade. The industry is in a state of flux, and nobody really knows what's going on. This, we are meant to believe, is a bad thing.

— Spice Girls, Oasis and Alanis Morissette — are all still very early on in their careers, and the market is too uncertain to ensure their continuing sales over, say, a decade. The industry is in a state of flux, and nobody really knows what's going on. This, we are meant to believe, is a bad thing.

And of course it is a bad thing if you're a record company executive who needs to make long-range financial estimates as to whether he can afford a company jet. If you're a groovy punter, however, who digs tunes, then life is very sweet. Falling sales mean that, at some point, the still

absolutely ludicrous price of CDs will have to be slashed just to keep the market afloat. A fast turnover of acts mean that more potential stars are being given a break; and restlessness in the charts means that new and different sounds are welcomed.

There is not much point in

singles hanging around — indeed, I think it depresses the nation as a whole when singles become freakishly long-lived. I still look back on Wet Wet Wet's 11-week stretch at No.1 with the same kind of embittered melancholy with which First World War veterans reflect on the Somme.

And besides, the world is a more exciting place when each week spits out a new pop hero, a new No.1. There can never be too many stars.

Clive Davis



CAITLIN MORAN

THE "HEROES" SYMPHONY

Following on from the acclaimed "Low" Symphony, Philip Glass's latest masterpiece brings a unique new dimension to "Heroes", one of rock's seminal albums.

"Philip has put more of himself in this new album, but the irony is that I believe that he's actually put his finger on more of my original voice."

David Bowie

STARTS TODAY

Ireland's finest

Divine Comedy and Ash scoop the awards pool

ALTHOUGH the Brits are under starter's orders for the bash at Earls Court on Monday, it was the Irish who jumped the gun: their annual music biz shindig, the Heineken/Hot Press Rock Awards, took place last night in Belfast. Ash and the Divine Comedy led the pack, the power-pop trio carrying off the gongs for Best Band and Best Single (*Oh Yeah*) and the Divine Comedy's Neil Hannan landing Best Songwriter and Best Album (*Casanova*).

After a year in which the Irish rock scene was dominated by acts from the North — singer/songwriter Brian Kennedy, dance guru David Holmes, and the great Van Morrison — it was appropriate that the ceremony was held outside Dublin for the first time. But the South was not entirely outdone: Dublin's Bawl were voted Best New Band; Boyzone were the Pick of the Pops Act; and trad stalwarts Altan took the Roots Award. Radiohead were deemed the best international live act.

NICK KELLY

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EDUCATION

Maths lessons that add up to success

Roger Luxton and Graham Last, two educationists, on Swiss techniques

A new approach to mathematics teaching, based on the success of Swiss schools, is being developed in this country. In international maths tests for pupils aged 13, Swiss children have far outperformed pupils in England, with an average score of 70.8 per cent, compared with 59.5 per cent here.

A third of English pupils could reach no more than the score of the Swiss lowest tier. In other words, there were three times as many low achievers in mathematics in England as in Switzerland.

The weaknesses in English attainment remained, in 1990, much as they were 27 years earlier at the time of the first international tests in 1962. These weaknesses are particularly evident in areas such as the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, which thought it might learn from the Swiss experience.

More than 300 lessons have been recorded by our teams of teachers on their visits to Switzerland over the past three years. These observations have been supplemented by the scrutiny of pupils' work, review of textbooks, teacher manuals and materials.

All the observations in primary schools have been of mixed-ability classes. The differences in attainment identified in the statistics of the international comparisons have been confirmed time after time by the standards achieved in classrooms as observed by the teachers. One typical example of what an 11-year-old pupil can achieve

was seen in one class's response to a sheet of mental arithmetic sums. The pupils had three minutes to prepare the answers in their heads. They could respond with extraordinary (in our eyes) facility by being asked to answer at random. It was not a circus turn. The pupils' success was based on the application of secure mental-calculating strategies acquired since the start of schooling.

A growing number of schools in Barking and Dagenham have been using the Swiss methods. In Switzerland, a teacher's prime aim is to ensure that most pupils reach a basic standard as set out in the curriculum for each year-group. There is a strong sense of teachers and pupils working together to enable the class as a whole to reach a standard. The idea of catching up is important.

The curriculum is structured in such a way as to allow for a good deal of consolidation, especially in number. A faster rate of learning in the later years of schooling depends on a thorough consolidation of fundamentals at earlier stages.

Arithmetic accounts for something like 80 per cent of maths teaching in primary schools. (This compares, according to Ofsted estimates, to most primary schools in England devoting "just over half" of the time allocated to maths to number work.) Until the age of nine, mental work in arithmetic is given precedence over written methods. Number facts are learnt by



Children in the borough of Barking and Dagenham use an overhead projector in the Swiss learning style

heart through frequent use. Calculators are seen as potentially retarding the development of mental strategies and are not used in primary schools. Whole-class teaching dominates. Lessons have a consistent form, pace and rhythm and are constructed from the same elements. They are almost always 45 minutes long.

High-quality talk and discussion involving the whole class predominates. There is relatively little individual writing during lessons. Because children are accustomed from kindergarten to making extensive oral contributions, there is far less embarrassment about speaking aloud to the whole class than is often found in England.

The best room layout is the horseshoe arrangement of tables or desks, promoting maximum, but controllable, interaction between pupils. Pupils are involved in taking the lesson forward. There

are many invitations to pupils to go to the front to lead the lesson, usually with the help of an overhead projector (still little used in English primary classrooms). Children are helped to learn by detailing orally in correct language what they are doing and why, and explaining points to other children.

These ideas formed the basis for the pilot project in Barking and Dagenham from January to July in 1995. Sixteen classes of nine-year-olds (Year Four) from six schools — 400 pupils — took part.

After favourable initial reactions by teachers and pupils, it was decided to extend the project in the autumn term of 1995 to include all Year Four and Five classes in these six schools; a total of 850 pupils.

Much was achieved. The capacity of all the children in the classes to speak correctly, at the right pace and volume, was greatly improved. A new air of enthusiasm was

created in many classes, which was recognised by teachers, pupils and also by parents who saw the results.

We are convinced that much of this basic work should be tackled when the children are younger, as on the Continent. A new phase began in 21 schools in Barking and Dagenham in November with Year Two classes (six-year-olds). We hope soon to include Year One.

We are planning for it to be a long haul. No overnight transformation in attainment should be expected from using the new methods — a faster rate of learning in the later years of schooling depends on acquiring the fundamentals during early years.

Roger Luxton is principal inspector in Barking and Dagenham. Adapted from *Underachievement and Pedagogy*, published by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

At last, real help for stammerers

Norman Miller on the affliction that can ruin some children's lives

For the estimated 100,000 pupils in Britain who stammer, wasted potential can seem inevitable. Now a video from the British Stammering Association (BSA) sets out to prevent that waste, offering information and guidance to teachers who may suffer from ignorance, prejudice or uncertainty about a condition once described as an "enigma wrapped in a mystery".

Stammering is not a product of laziness or stupidity — Isaac Newton, Winston Churchill, Alan Turing, Jonathan Miller, Marilyn Monroe, Rowan Atkinson and Michael Caine have all stammered. The affliction affects four times as many boys as girls, and can manifest or conceal itself in many ways. Teacher may not even realise a pupil has a stammer since a child may move heaven and earth not to open their mouth in class (unwittingly feeding the "lazy or stupid" myth) or cause whatever disruption might draw attention away from their speech — at the same time, perhaps, gaining kudos among classmates who would otherwise torment them.

Either way, such stammerers are likely to lose out in the end unless their teachers notice the problem and act appropriately — which is where the BSA's *A Chance to Speak* video and pamphlet come in. The video focuses on a school day in the life of 12-year-old Matthew, starting with a fluent confession to his (non-judgmental) hamster about his dread of the coming day, before unfolding a depressingly inevitable sequence of embarrassments. Old standards such as morning registration, where classmates are quick to mock the first stammerer of the day, go hand in hand with an unexpected corridor encounter with the school football team coach, which puts Matthew under more pressure, and finally the torture of a

class talk which Matthew's flustered form teacher eventually cuts short to spare him some blushes — action which also marks him out as someone "unable" to contribute.

It is only after butting in on some playground bullying that Miss decides to offer speech therapy.

Such an ideal happy ending does not, however, always square with reality. Mandy Hitchcock, the special needs supervisor at a Greenwich comprehensive, says that the standard vehicle for providing extra help for pupils, the Special Needs Register, is already overloaded, with 200 pupils at her 1,000-strong school on the register. Such a daunting figure takes in a wide range of problems — severe literacy troubles, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and, increasingly, medical complaints.

Ms Hitchcock admits that stammering is not a priority in itself, although it can be a catalyst for more severe behavioural problems that do manage to gain attention.

Some succour comes in the special needs recommendations issued by the Department for Education for oral examinations, although guidelines for giving stammering pupils extra time must tread a fine line between trying to remove the effects of dysfluency without giving any unfair advantage.

Though detailing such regulations and offering general information, the pamphlet accompanying the BSA's *A Chance to Speak* is also at pains to emphasise the importance of teacher attitudes to stammering, both within the classroom and in such matters as career advice, where too often stammerers are warned off whole spheres of employment on the basis of prejudice.

The video should help to change that.



Monroe and Newton: stammerers who made it

Academics want a stake in the planning process, says David Triesman

Pundits tell us the general election could be decided by 150,000 voters in key constituencies. Votes of staff and students in traditional universities could decide the destination of 16 seats and the higher education vote as a whole could swing the result in more than 26. It is a vote worth attending to.

The Association of University Teachers' new programme, *Higher Education in the UK: Mapping the Future*, published this week, sets out standards we believe we should seek for universities, students and the country. It advocates proposals that could be taken on even in advance of the review of higher education, chaired by Sir Ron Dearing, which is not due until the summer. All prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) will receive a copy with a questionnaire on attitudes to it. As we shall report back on responses to the questionnaire, then before the electorate casts its votes, the academic community will know whether each PPC has the interests of higher education at heart.

Overwhelmingly, the academic community wants an independent pay review to replace the conflict on salaries of past years. This system is used for nearly all other public sector professionals, whose salaries have risen faster than those of academics.

The most pressing issues surround funding. We need new sources of money for our universities.

AUT advocates new, long-dated Learning Bonds, paid for by companies through a 1 per cent increase in

And now for the democracy thing

corporation vote. The bonds, which would attract a small amount of interest and mature after 20 years, would fund a new student loan system. A Learning Bank would be set up to handle the loans and their repayment.

It now seems inevitable that students will make a contribution as beneficiaries and it is critical that any new development is non-regressive and does not become a motor for hardship, as at present. Student loan repayments would be triggered on reaching average earnings and phased over a much longer timescale than the current five years.

Better funding should be allied to longer planning. It takes years to create courses or to launch world-class research, yet funding horizons are year-by-year. The UK needs a stable, five-year system so that we can plan to get into the top quarter of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for public expenditure on higher education — then stay there. We start 15 per cent below the average. It is essential that new money in the

system is not wasted. We should replace the bureaucratic method of quality assurance with one which leads to constant development and enhancement of staff ability. At present, more than a third of staff time is used pushing paper around — without any discernible outcomes.

If the system were working there would be no background noise about the impossibility of comparing degrees from different universities. The UK would benefit from full involvement of staff and a scheme for bringing examiners together to compare what they are doing.

This presumes that students are getting a fair deal. It is essential in higher education to guarantee every student individual teaching. In our programme we call for a compact with students — to be signed by both parties — where the explicit right to personal teaching is matched by an obligation to follow courses diligently.

These issues are as important to the profession as salaries and they reflect the seriousness with which the profession wants a stake in educational decisions. AUT wants no less influence than exists for professionals in medicine. That is why the response of each PPC, or any non-response, will be the basis of a detailed briefing for each member. This is not the party political thing. It is the democracy thing.

The author is the general secretary of the AUT. Mapping the future is available free of charge from the AUT, 9 Penbridge Road, London W11 3JY.

Pupils take on counselling role

Countering bullying and solving homework problems are all in a day's work for student counsellors at Myrddbach Comprehensive in Swansea. The 15 and 16-year-olds staff the school's new counselling room every lunchtime and invite younger pupils to discuss their problems.

The service was conceived by a group of final-year students led by Rachel John, 15. "Having been bullied in the past," she says, "I know that younger pupils need help."

Her friend Anna Lucas, 15, adds: "We felt that they would prefer to talk to us rather than to teachers because they often don't realise how awful name-calling and other forms of verbal bullying can be."

The girls realised that they needed training to make a success of the service. Encouraged by head teacher Glyn Davies, they approached the

Maths and mediation go hand in hand at a Welsh comprehensive, says Lola Smith

West Glamorgan Council for Voluntary Service. Last term they took a six-week mediation course run by Jennifer Twelvetrees, the council's head of training.

She says: "We emphasised the importance of listening and establishing rules that covered issues such as confidentiality. I also pointed out that a teacher needed to be involved in case some of the issues raised were beyond the students' experience."

The 14 students on the course earned a certificate in mediation and listening skills. This term the training is being put into practice. "Pupils know that we will listen and that we care," says Lindsey Stokes, 16. "We started out focusing on bullying but now

we've extended the service. People may be falling behind with their homework, or they may want us to talk to a teacher on their behalf. We try to help whatever the problem."

Glyn Davies, the head teacher, is delighted with the initiative. "The idea came from them, and the girls have worked hard to set up the service."

Myrddbach is a comprehensive school for girls aged 11 to 16 and because Rachel and her team want the service to continue long-term, they are about to start preparing next year's final-year students for counselling duties. Mrs Twelvetrees will help with the training and, in the interim, she and the girls plan to establish a workshop for par-

ents on conflict resolution. The group also wants to extend the counselling service to pupils at Myrddbach's feeder primaries. Bullying is no more of a problem at this school than at any other, but Rachel wants to stamp out the problem altogether.

Her initiative is welcomed by Delyn Tatum, founder of the Countering Bullying Unit at the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff. "Any scheme that reduces bullying is to be encouraged," he says. "This is to be applauded for giving responsibility to young people."

Mr Tatum endorses the idea of teacher involvement and recommends that the students have regular debriefing sessions with staff. "If they hear traumatic stories," he says, "they may need help themselves. Otherwise, carrying the burden could become too much to bear."

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

Exclusive screenings of *The Crucible*

Readers of *The Times* have the chance to enjoy an exclusive preview screening of *The Crucible*, with Academy Award winner Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder and Joan Allen.

Author Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay for *The Crucible*, adapting his stage play about a group of teenage girls accused of witchcraft in Salem in 1692. The film, directed by Nicholas Hytner (director of *The Madness of King George*) is a drama about collective evil and personal guilt.

SHOWCASE (6.30-7pm): Birmingham: Erdington; Bristol: Avon Meads; Coventry: Cross Point; Glasgow: Showcase Leisure Park; Bargaeddie; Leeds: Batley; Liverpool: Norris Green; Manchester: Belle Vue; Nottingham: Lenton; Peterborough: Boongate; Reading: Womersley; Stockport: Teesside Leisure Park; Walsall: Bentley Mill Way. **WAPNOR (6-6.30pm):** Acland: Royal Leisure Cinema; Cambridge: Grafton Centre; Croydon: Lathams Way; Funchley: Great North Leisure Park; Harrow: St Georges Shopping & Leisure Centre. **ODENM (6-6.30pm):** London: 40 Leicester Square. ***UCI (6.30-7pm):** Please collect your two free tickets for UCI cinemas after 1pm on Friday, February 21: Milton Keynes: UCI 10, The Point, 602 Midsummer Boulevard; Sheffield: UCI 10, Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre; Donley: UCI 10, Merryhill Centre; Derby: UCI 10, Meteor Centre; West Tamworth: UCI 10, Lakeside Retail Park; Swansea: UCI 10, Quay Parade, Parc Tawe; Poole: UCI 10, Tower Park; Preston: UCI 10, Riversway; Ashton on Ribbles: Blackwell: UCI 10, The Point, Skimped Hill Lane; Lee Valley: UCI 12, Picketts Lock, Edmonton.



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Collect four differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and attach them to the voucher which will be published tomorrow. Present the completed voucher and tokens at one of the cinemas listed at the specified time of the screening (not before — except for UCI cinemas, see left*). The voucher entitles you to two seats only for a screening of *The Crucible* on Monday, February 24, 1997. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to availability.

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CHANGING TIMES

RUGBY UNION: ENGLAND COACH REMAINS UNMOVED BY LIONS' PREFERENCES FOR FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP CLASH WITH FRANCE

Rowell sticks with team of record-breakers

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE British Isles selectors may disagree, but Jack Rowell, the England coach, is not for turning where his side is concerned. In the week in which the Lions ignored the England threequarters in their preliminary tour party, Rowell yesterday named an unchanged XV for the five nations' championship match with France at Twickenham on March 1.

Rowell will remember taking an unchanged XV through the 1995 championship, which ended in a grand slam for England, and he is not disposed to drop those who have accumulated 87 points in

record victories over Scotland and Ireland. The only amendment to the match squad which did duty in Dublin last weekend sees the return as replacement hooker of Phil Greening, whose knee injury allowed Richard Cockerill a brief glimpse of the big time.

"We have all been searching for this integrated rugby for so long and for players with the ability to become involved in that kind of game," Les Cusworth, the assistant coach, said. "We saw signs of it in Dublin, but there is still some way to go. Players are still being squeezed under pressure, but some questions were answered at the weekend."

Thus Jeremy Guscott and Austin

Healey, late replacements against Ireland, return to the bench, and Will Greenwood — named, like them, by the Lions — remains as England captain for the A international with France on February 28. Few will have expected anything else, including Phil de Glanville, who informed an audience at the Cambridge University Union on Wednesday night that he has no great rapport with Fran Cotton, the British Lions manager.

De Glanville, the England captain, was critical of the timing of the Lions squad announcement on Monday — regardless of his omission — because he felt that it would be a distraction to players concentrating on the five nations. "It is no

ENGLAND TEAM

ENGLAND: T R G Simpson (Newcastle); J M Shepherdson (Bath); W O Caring (Rugby); P R de Glanville (Bath, captain); T Underwood (Newcastle); P J Grayson (Northampton); A C T Cusworth (Worcester); G C Rowlands (Leicester); M P Ryan (Bristol); L Leonard (Leicester); L B M Duggan (Newcastle); M O Johnson (Leicester); S D Pacey (Bristol); R A H Jones (Leicester); T A K Packer (Northampton); J C Guscott (Leicester); J C Guscott (Bath); M J Guscott (Bath); J Guscott (Leicester); P R de Glanville (Bath); J Guscott (Leicester); S B Clarke (Richmond).

great secret that I do not get on with Fran Cotton," de Glanville told his audience. "When I was one of the England players' representatives during difficult early negotiations with the Rugby Football Union [RFU] this season, I had some

interesting discussions with him. When he was appointed Lions manager, I thought it was unlikely I would be going to South Africa."

Rowell's priorities remain the development of a team that has the experience and calm authority of de Glanville and Will Carling at its heart — for now. Moreover, the success of his team will help to create a less frenetic outlook among the England administrators as they explore the new world of professionalism.

Yesterday, the second division clubs discussed the structure of the domestic game at Rugby while one of their number outlined the hard

facts of sporting life. Frank Warren, who has taken over the chairmanship of Bedford, admitted that he had already invested twice the sum he had anticipated in the club this season.

"We don't expect to make any profit for five years, but we have to adopt a professional attitude, on and off the field," Warren said. "If players expect to receive payment, then they have to perform to a standard that matches the expectations of their employers."

"I am determined that Bedford will become the No 1 club in the country within the next five years, but we are going to have to invest heavily and our members are going to have to pay more. Our

facilities aren't good enough and we shall have to look at whether we develop [Goldington Road] or whether we move somewhere else in the town if we are to entertain the likes of Bath and Leicester. We can no longer be a benevolent society."

While representatives of the second division clubs debated a proposal from Nottingham that there should be no relegation this season, and the size of the division next season, Moseley splashed out once more by signing Ian Smith, the Scotland flanker, from Gloucester. Smith has been at odds with Gloucester for most of this season and has played little first-team rugby. He hopes to make his debut against Rugby on March 8.

Brittle is after tight controls

By DAVID HANDS

CLIFF BRITTLE admitted yesterday that he has relaxed his demand for another special general meeting of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to debate the game's future, but he called for stricter regulation of the movement of players and the control of finances.

Brittle, chairman of the RFU executive committee, accepted on a visit to Elyde that the union and its leading clubs had established a legally-binding agreement. "But people in the game of rugby are worried about its future and the use of money earned by the sport," he said. "Clubs in the third and fourth divisions are committed to just as much expenditure — sometimes more when it comes to travel."

"I am very unhappy about the situation in which the RFU and, indeed, the Welsh Rugby Union have had to bail out some clubs."

Representatives of the European elite meet in Dublin today to discuss the structure of next season, amid speculation that a television agreement involving Scotland, Ireland and Wales is nearing fruition.

Newcastle spirit to be put to the test

Rob Andrew sees the visit of Leicester to Tyneside as a time to assess the progress of his side



the Leicester ABC club: can Garath Archer out-jump Martin Johnson at the lineout? For my part, I have never faced Joel Stursky, whose play I admire.

These are the sort of names who have given rugby such a tremendous lift in the professional era. The game's profile has been boosted, and in the five nations' championship we have already witnessed professionalism's benefits in greater fitness and enhanced physical strength.

England's record-breaking defeat of Scotland and Ireland were direct results of clubs' efforts. If there is one thing that I would like to see changed, however, it is the breaking up of the dominance of Leicester, Bath, Wasps and Harlequins. Sale, Saracens and Northampton are striving hard, but I believe that Newcastle have the potential to get into the top four, hopefully next year, and be a competitive force in Europe, eventually.

The references to Newcastle being a team of mercenaries anger me. The nearest big club from here, on the eastern side

of the country, is a four-hour drive, at Leicester. The Newcastle Falcons venture is a genuine attempt to redress that imbalance, to reverse the trend of players moving south, and to give rugby in the North a new, vibrant and, hopefully, winning focus.

It is not an expensive side to run: our wage bill compared with many other clubs is not excessive. Big-money signings have been around in rugby much longer than people care to remember, except it was rugby union players switching for significant sums to rugby league. All that has happened is that the traffic is now moving in the opposite direction. Vaiga Tuigamala, incidentally, whom we signed on Wednesday, cannot play against Leicester as he was captained by Wasps.

Team spirit is usually forged over years, but at Newcastle there is already that spirit, the will to win and thirst for success. From a playing point of view, tomorrow will be my biggest day in 16 months at Newcastle: victory would be a bonus.

Rob Andrew is director of rugby at Newcastle.



Rios plays a forehand during his defeat by Damm in a match in which both players were hampered by injury

Injury fails to burst Damm's resolve

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

MARTIN DAMM, of the Czech Republic, shrugged off the inconvenience of a twisted ankle, sustained in the closing stages of his match, to advance to the quarter-finals of the European Community Championship in Antwerp with a 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 victory.

Damm, ranked No 48 in the world, had led 5-2 in the deciding set against the Chilean, who last weekend was forced to retire because of a leg injury in the final of a tournament in Marseille, and finally went through after a tie-break.

Damm won the first meet-

ing between the two players after a contest lasting two hours, 12 minutes, but Rios said that he was still suffering from the leg injury that had forced him to retire four days earlier.

"I don't think I was fit enough to have played," Rios, 22, the second seed, said. "My leg didn't feel so good. Every point was killing my leg. I didn't feel like I wanted to quit during the match — I did that already. But, if I had won, I don't think I would have been able to play the next match anyway."

After having his left ankle taped, Damm came back out to secure a meeting in the last eight with Marc Goellner, of

Germany, on the first of three match points.

Petr Korda, the 29-year-old Czech, defeated Javier Sánchez, of Spain, 6-3, 6-3, and Francisco Clavet accounted for Johan Van Herck, of Belgium, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

The tournament has been blighted by injuries to leading players, with Boris Becker and Goran Ivanisevic forced to withdraw before playing their matches.

Andrew Richardson, from Lincolnshire, the top seed, will meet Luke Milligan, the Great Britain Davis Cup player, in the quarter-finals of the LTA men's indoor satellite tournament at Eastbourne today.

In the second round yesterday,

Richardson defeated the Lancastrian player, Barry Cowan, 6-2, 7-6, while Milligan, from Middlesex, knocked out Markus Wisniewski, the German qualifier, 5-7, 6-1, 6-3.

Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, has confirmed his entry for the Nottingham Open, which will be staged from June 16 to 21. Rusedski, who has reached the finals of the Croatian Open and a tournament in San Jose in the past three weeks, said: "I'm really looking forward to returning to Nottingham. It's always a thrill to play in front of a home crowd and I'm determined to improve on my semi-final showing [of last year]."

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BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Atlanta 100 Indiana 97; Charlotte 123 Phoenix 112; Detroit 100 Washington 85; Orlando 56 Portland 54; Toronto 125 San Antonio 82; Utah 94 Vancouver 72; Golden State 112 Boston 101; Cleveland 103 LA Lakers 84.

EUROPEAN LEAGUE: Barcelona 105 Dynamo 92; Lyon 29, Paris 28; Manchester 95, Real Madrid 23; Ash 5, Sion 12.

EUROPEAN CUP: Group G: Panathinaikos 87, FC Bayern 77; FC Barcelona 77, Real Madrid 72; Valencia 77, Real Madrid 72; Valencia 77, Real Madrid 72.

BOXING

TORONTO: World Bantamweight Contest: Gary Payton (Ph) vs Harold Kinsella (Ap), holder, 6:0.

CRICKET

DURHAM: Test match: first day of last; North 335 (M L Boyce 105, D L Underwood 103; J N Gillespie 4-71); Australia 210.

CHAMPAIGN: SAARC tournament (50 overs): India A vs Sri Lanka A: Match abandoned due to rain.

CYCLING

RUTA DEL SOL: Fourth stage (Cataluña, 170km): J J Mueser (Bel) 40; J J Mueser (Bel) 40; J J Mueser (Bel) 40; J J Mueser (Bel) 40.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results: FA CUP: Arsenal 1, Derby County 2; Sheffield Wednesday 2, Liverpool 4; Leeds 0, Portsmouth 2; West Ham 1, Newcastle 1.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First division: Portsmouth 2, Queens Park Rangers 0; Reading 1, Walsley 1.

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Basement better than annexe for Rochdale

I was inevitable, I knew the temptation would be too great. It had to be a teddy bear, or one of those bibs with the slogan, "I'm The Best Dribbler In..." It is something men do — we pass on our football teams like a family heirloom.

My son, George, is four months old. Among his few possessions is a teddy bear in a shiny royal blue football strip with Rochdale FC emblazoned upon it. My father bought it and I am touched that he interrupted his working day to visit the club shop and buy it especially for his grandson.

I have been more reticent about this gentle indoctrination since Rochdale have brought me misery and joy in equal measures. The pain of defeat upon defeat has sometimes been too acute and the aura of losing gets on your clothes, in your bones. There is another problem, too, of far greater significance — will Rochdale survive? Is my father encouraging my son to fall in love with a terminally ill football club?

Rochdale are a typical Nationwide League third division club. So typical, that they have remained in professional football's bottom division for 23 years, which is longer than anyone else. They do not have the debts of Millwall, Bournemouth or Darlington, but common sense dictates that, somewhere between the black and the red, lies a large financial bruise that is the Rochdale bank balance.

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, has warned that football's professional pyramid might not be built to last. He has suggested that more "liaison" is required

MARK HODKINSON



between clubs. If liaison means top clubs loaning out the odd player to a lower division club, or offering use of training facilities, the notion is fine.

There are suggestions, however, that "liaison" might be a cover for something more ominous. The egotism of some FA Carling Premiership clubs is such that they plan to ask less wealthy teams to become their "feeder" clubs.

While this has to be properly defined, it will probably amount to them taking a controlling interest in smaller clubs. They will then use them to develop talent under a formal agreement to inherit the better players. In other words, Rochdale could well become another version of Manchester United Reserves.

Several clubs from football's lowest caste have already expressed support for the idea. Crewe Alexandra have

climbed into bed with Liverpool; the terminology here has been an "alliance". The first consequence of this is that Gareth Whalley, Crewe's promising midfield player,

has been summoned to Anfield on trial. This sets a worrying precedent, since it shows that Crewe's priority is not strengthening their own team, but someone else's. If Chesterfield and Wrexham had adopted the same policy, would they still be in the FA Cup?

Some clubs clearly take the view that survival is more important than autonomy, but they are overlooking a basic tenet of being a football supporter. Part of loving your team, really loving, is an antipathy towards everyone else. I do not want to see Rochdale in servitude to Liverpool, Manchester United etc. I want to see them victorious in a cup match, with Roy Evans or Alex Ferguson crying into John Motson's sheepskin coat on Match of the Day.

I support Rochdale precisely because they are an autocracy. We might lose more regularly than I would like, but at least the ineptitude is all our own. We answer to no one, owe nothing to anyone — except the bank. A large part of fanaticism is the exclusivity of one's loyalty. It is a love that cannot be shared, whatever the inducement. Although my view might seem parochial, I would rather see Rochdale fold than annexed.

We see talent in its raw state. Usually, these players stay with the club two or three seasons. If Rochdale become a feeder club, they will be whisked away after a handful of matches and our diet will forever be the stodgy fare of football journeymen.

On Tuesday, I watched Rochdale play Hereford United at Spotland in a 0-0 draw. I was part of the smallest crowd to watch a game of professional football in England this season. It rained, the sleet came down, but all 1,374 of us saw a young man of enormous potential in Rochdale's No 10 shirt. His first touch is sure, his passing elegant, and he has the courage to eschew the obvious for the enterprising. Alex Russell belongs to Rochdale, from his shin pads to his intelligent footballing brain, and no other club has a timeshare on this talent.

There is also the pervasive joy of the idiosyncratic nature of your own particular club. The ground has its own smell, its own characters; a whole series of beautiful peculiarities. These exist for their own sake, in their own right. When Football Club pic comes along, they will be merely incidental, an addendum to the mother ship down the motorway. If someone offers to decorate your house, make sure it is not an condition that they choose the wallpaper.

□ Lynne Truss is away.

Royle warned over outburst at referee

JOE ROYLE, the Everton manager, has been given a warning about his future conduct by the Football Association over remarks he made to David Elleray, the referee, after the FA Carling Premiership match at Blackburn Rovers in September.

Royle made his comments in an outburst in the dressing-rooms after the game, during which the Harrow official sent off Duncan Ferguson. Royle, who attended a hearing at Lancaster Gate yesterday, had been charged with misconduct by the FA.

The postponed Coca-Cola Cup semi-final, first leg between Stockport

County and Middlesbrough has been rearranged for next Wednesday at Edgeley Park. Middlesbrough's Premiership match with Manchester United, due to have taken place at Old Trafford the same night, has consequently been postponed.

Celtic yesterday completed the signing of Enrico Annoni, the AS Roma defender. The Italian was valued in the region of £350,000 and is expected to add strength to a defence that has looked suspect at times this season. Celtic are hoping that Annoni, 30, will receive international clearance in time to play at Motherwell tomorrow.

SPORTS LETTERS

Hodde right to alter approach

From Ms Marian Thomas

Sir, Steve McNamara's column (February 17) says it all. The hand-writing that followed England's defeat by Italy last week was considerably overdone, and the hysterical press pilorying of Matt Le Tissier was quite contemptible.

Given the traditional strengths of Italy, the result was not astonishing (albeit a different one would have been welcome), nor was England's game quite as deficient as post-match depression suggests. Le Tissier gave a perfect.

Simply the best

From Mr Hugh Cartwright

Sir, I accept that I am still coming to terms with Jimmy Greaves not being included in the England team for the 1966 football World Cup final.

Now I find that Jeremy Gosson, undoubtedly the pick of current England, if not world, rugby centres, does not start in the international line-up. He came on with three minutes to go against Ireland last Saturday and with exquisitely timed passes added the class for Tony Underwood to score two tries. I accept that the opponents were tired by then, but why does the paying public not see the best? Are we not the ones that matter?

Just think about it in 1966: there would have been no need for extra-time. Greaves would have scored the winner.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH CARTWRIGHT,
22 Shrewsbury Mews, W2.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211.

Punishment deserved

From Mr Mark Brennan

Sir, I cannot agree with the Helens captain, yesterday, who said that the legal action proposed by Bradford City against Kevin Gray is bad for football.

Thirteen years ago, in a West Midlands League match, I was on the receiving end of a brutal tackle. I was left with a double fracture of the right leg and, then 26, I never played again.

I have no doubt that the player who committed the tackle did it with the intent to harm. A known "hard man", he neither visited me in hospital nor apologised for his action, further confirming my belief that his challenge was deliberate.

To say that no professional footballer would deliberately set out to break another's leg is naive. Does Mr Vander Byl consider the two-footed, over-the-ball tackle, which we witness every season, as just an accepted part of game? Players who commit such offences should be banned and, where injury results, prosecuted.

Yours faithfully,
MARK BRENNAN,
52-54 Lichfield Street,
Wolverhampton,
West Midlands.

Doubts answered

From Mr M. A. Atherton

Sir, Following the great performance from the England cricket captain in the final Test against New Zealand, media doubters will predictably change their tune. The Atherton family motto "nec elatus, nec dejectus" (neither uplifted, nor downcast) should serve as a reminder not to take some media comments too seriously.

Yours etc.,
MARK ATHERTON,
9 Gander Hill,
Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Alphand slips back in the groove

LAST week Luc Alphand went to Sestriere, Italy, as the favourite for the gold medal in the world Alpine skiing championship downhill race. Instead, Alphand, 31, from France, crashed into the snow, the victim of a rare spill that ruined his medal hopes.

Less than a week after the end of the championships, Alphand is back on the World Cup circuit, still in the running for three titles. In Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, yesterday he gave notice that he is still a force on the slopes by posting the fastest time in the practice run for the downhill race tomorrow.

Alphand descended one of the most challenging mountain circuits in the world in 1min 57.88sec, 0.48sec ahead of Kristian Ghedina, of Italy, who is second in the downhill rankings. Pietro Vitalini, another Italian, was third fastest in 1min 58.44sec.

Bruno Kernen, of Switzerland, the world champion, was eighteenth, some three seconds behind Alphand. Lasse Kjus, of Norway, the runner-up, was 45th.

Alphand won on the tough Kandahar piste last year but, after Sestriere, he needs to bounce back to form quickly in the German resort, where super giant slaloms are scheduled for today and tomorrow in addition to the downhill.

Training times on the World Cup circuit can sometimes be misleading, as some racers do not ski to their limits, but Alphand went flat out because he needed to boost his self-confidence.

"I went faster than usual today because I needed to prove to myself that I was OK," he said. "I had a week off after Sestriere, but I managed to motivate myself for the World Cup immediately."

Alphand is also bidding to become the first Frenchman to win the overall World Cup title since Jean-Claude Killy, in 1968. He is just four points behind Kjetil Andre Aamodt, of Norway, who clocked the



Alphand was in prime form in downhill practice at Garmisch-Partenkirchen yesterday

25th-fastest downhill time of 2min 01.01sec but is a stronger all-round skier.

There are 11 races left in the World Cup programme, seven of which are speed events, in which Alphand will have the chance to pick up points. He leads in the downhill and

super giant slalom standings and has 737 points to Aamodt's 741 overall. In the downhill, Alphand has a 71-point lead over Ghedina, who won the bronze medal in Sestriere. By winning the first super giant slalom of his career in Laax, Switzerland,

in January, Alphand has also taken the lead in that event. 21 points ahead of Hans Knaus, of Austria.

The weather was warm in Garmisch, yesterday, but organisers were confident that the races would be able to go ahead.

GOLF: ECCENTRICITY TO FORE AS RESOLUTE PLAYERS TRY AGAIN AT RYE

Furies roar fresh welcome to Putter

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

RIGHT on cue, the weather has taken a turn for the worse. The three inches of snow that blanketed Rye Golf Club and caused the President's Putter to be postponed in the first week in January melted away long ago. In its place, just in time for the restart of the Putter this morning, has come a wind that could be called lion-hearted except that that barely seems adequate for the vengeful furies that have roared in the past days.

John Behrend sat in his flat overlooking the 2nd fairway at Hoylake, near Liverpool, on Wednesday and feared for the roof. "There were squally

showers rattling against the windows but the main thing was the wind. It created a horrible banging noise on the roof, as if the tiles were being dislodged one by one. I am afraid I did not check whether all the tiles were still in place before I left. Perhaps I should have done."

By yesterday, the wind had abated but not disappeared. In the sturdy Rye clubhouse, hidden among the dunes, the direction gauge in the corridor indicated a southerly wind gusting up to 35mph at lunchtime. Added to this was a stinging rain.

Veterans of the President's Putter rubbed their hands. This event would not be the same in a flat calm, any more

than the Grand National would be the Grand National with half as many fences.

"If you think this is bad," Peter Gardiner-Hill said, "you should have seen it in 1993 when the final had to be abandoned after a few holes because the wind was so strong." That day two competitors in a subsidiary competition reached the edge of the green of the short 5th and then one took 14 puts.

Among the members of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society, Peter Gracey, who is competing in his 49th successive Putter, is regarded with a mixture of awe and admiration. He still plays in little more warning than a thin sweater which, if past

years are anything to go by, retains a hole in its elbow. There is a rumour circulating that a friendly relative has either had the hole repaired or bought him a new sweater.

For the sake of tradition and eccentricity it is to be hoped that this scurrilous rumour is without foundation. Gracey and Peter Bathurst, author of the history of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society and captain in 1972, had a few friendly holes yesterday morning and were then interviewed by local television.

Mark Cox will be pleased to get underway this morning. In January he flew over from the United States unaware that the weather was about to cause the postponement.

IN BRIEF

Goulding penalty shortened

BOBBIE GOULDING, the St Helens captain, yesterday had his eight-match ban reduced by two games at a Rugby Football League appeal hearing in Leeds. He had received the punishment after pleading guilty to a high tackle in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup fourth-round tie against Wigan.

□ Golf: Thomas Gogele, of Germany, shot a course-record 64, eight under par, at the Houghton Golf Club to hold the first-round lead in the Alfred Dunhill PGA in Johannesburg yesterday.

□ José María Olazábal, of Spain, who has sidelined for 18 months with rheumatoid arthritis, said yesterday that he will make his long-awaited comeback at the Dubai Desert Classic next week.

□ Boxing: Joe Calzaghe, the unbeaten super-middleweight, will contest a world title in September, against either Steve Collins, the World Boxing Organisation champion, from Ireland, or Robin Reid, from Runcorn, who holds the World Boxing Council title.

□ Athletics: The International Amateur Athletic Federation has said that it is mystified by an application for reinstatement by Ben Johnson, the Canadian sprinter banned for life for drug taking.

□ Cycling: A riders' protest about the Tour of Langkawi transport arrangements resulted in the second stage being cancelled yesterday.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN,
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

One important tool in slam bidding is the "splitter" bid. In auctions in which a single jump in a new suit would be forcing, a double jump shows support for partner's suit and shortage in the bid suit. Here is an example from the 1996 Macallan Camrose international between Scotland and England.

AJ94 KQ653
AQ42 952
KQ1054 A J994

Brian Senior and I bid as follows:

Sheehan Senior
1D 1S
4C(1) 4D(2)
4H(2) 4NT(3)
5H(4) 6S
Pass

1. Splitter — short clubs, game-going values and spade support.
2. Cue-bids
3. "Five ace" Blackwood — spade king counts as an ace.
4. Two of five aces, without the queen of trumps.

The great virtue of splinters is

that they help the splinterer's partner to judge whether his high cards are in useful places. This was a somewhat flawed auction, as in principle a splitter should show a singleton rather than a void. However it still helped Senior, he could see that his good trumps, ace of diamonds and poor clubs were enough to make a slam promising.

This was the Scots' auction.

West East
1D 1S
4C 4D
4H 4S
4NT 6H
6S Pass

In my view East underbid and West overbid. Once East has heard the splitter bid and the heart cue-bid he should drive to slam rather than sign off in Four Spades. And West should pass Four Spades — by then he has described his hand. To bid on he needed more in the way of playing tricks, say

4AJ94V854+KQJ763+.

Both declarers made the slam on a cross-ruff.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

OSMUNDA
a. The backbone
b. A fern
c. A clean face

PONHAUS
a. Pork pudding
b. A town hall
c. A zigzag dagger

RELACHE
a. A rest
b. Husky reins
c. To defect again

POIPOI
a. A servant
b. A man's skin
c. Coconut porridge

Answers on page 42

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Jersey International

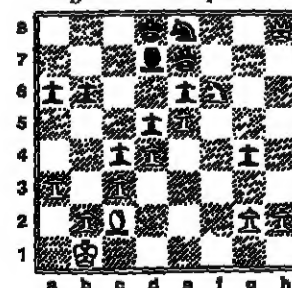
The De la Motte Festival of Chess in Jersey has attracted a strong field including grandmaster Bogdan Lalic, his wife and woman grandmaster Susan Lalic, former British champion grandmaster Julian Hodgson, and the reigning British champion, grandmaster Chris Ward. After four rounds Bogdan Lalic, Hodgson and Ward share the joint lead on 3½ points with Leigh Williams. In round four Hodgson won the following controlled game.

White: Julian Hodgson
Black: Kenneth McEwan
Jersey International,
February 1997

Trompovsky Attack

1 d4 Nf6
2 Bg5 e6
3 Nc2 d5
4 e3 Be7
5 Bc3 Nd7
6 f4 b6
7 Nh3 Bb7
8 Nf2 e5
9 c3 h6
10 Bb5 Bb6
11 Nf3 Qc7
12 Ne5 Bxe5
13 h5 Qd7
14 Qg4 g5
15 0-0-0 Rg8
16 Kb1 Qd8
17 Bb5 c4

Diagram of final position

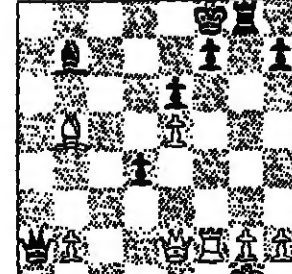


□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Lalic — Becerra, Linares 1997. Black may have thought that he had a good game here — his queen is ready to penetrate to White's back rank and he has pressure against g2. If so, White's continuation would have swiftly disillusioned him. What did he play?



Solution on page 42

CRICKET: SURREY PAIR'S STYLISH COMBINATION ENDS WAIT FOR OVERSEAS ONE-DAY VICTORY

England master straight role on pantomime stage

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN CHRISTCHURCH

CHRISTCHURCH (New Zealand won toss): England beat New Zealand by four wickets

VISUALLY, it was barely recognisable as the same game, but it was no coincidence that the result was unchanged. The momentum of an improbable Test victory 48 hours earlier swept England to further success here last night, in a form of cricket that they have recently found utterly alien.

The colour and clamour of overseas one-day international has been leaving England so cold that they had contrived to lose 12 in succession against Test-playing nations. Frequently, their collective nerve has cracked under pressure and lately, especially in Zimbabwe, their ineptitude has been visible.

There was no such surrender yesterday as an initially excitable Lancaster Park crowd of 25,000 was silenced by a performance imbued with the conviction of men who have rediscovered what it is to win and decided that they rather like it.

Only when England, already into the finishing straight, lost four wickets for 20 runs did the decibel level rise again and the pitch invaders, volunteering for the rough handling of the security staff, resume in earnest.

But by then England, even with their notable propensity

for collapse, were virtually beyond recall and Robert Croft, arriving at the crease with five required from nine balls, nervously drove his first two deliveries to the extra cover boundary.

"We had a wobble," the captain, Michael Atherton, said, "and we must learn that a game is never won until it's over. But, having said that, I would have found it extraordinary if we hadn't won."

This was a result that went some way to restoring England's diminished credibility in one-day cricket. The fact that their match-winner was Philip Tufnell, whose best one-day international analysis of four for 22 was a timely rejoinder to unproven claims of dope smoking in public, offered a measure of the player's character and the management's judgment.



Thorpe: commanding

Tufnell had not been expected to play, indeed had not been included in the provisional England XI. But a study of the week-old pitch, already used for a Test match, convinced the tour selectors to make a late revision and use two spin bowlers. It probably decided the game.

The New Zealand innings was strangled in midlife by Tufnell, for whom this was a first one-day cap in more than two years, but 223 might still have been a challenging target on a slow pitch. However, even after losing both openers with the total 28, England batted with the belief that has habitually been absent from their one-day cricket.

Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe, so often conspirators in the one-day successes of Surrey, belittled the task with a third-wicket stand of 170 in 34 overs and, although there was a hint of the cavalier in the way they departed, this first of five internationalists was settled with seven balls to spare.

Defeat will subdue the New Zealand cricket public, perhaps more so than a Test series that few here had expected to win anyway. There is such enthusiasm for one-day cricket in this country, such pride in the advances of their limited-overs team, that one sensed the marketing focus of the season was geared up for this carnival night.

The Lancaster Park lights were being used for the first time. So was New Zealand's new one-day strip — Pacific blue, with the ugly adornment of black boots. Schools were given a half-day and this genteel city, that strives to be so English in its layout and its street names, throbbed with almost unseemly anticipation of what, to English eyes, was just another limited-overs game.

The ground was full before play began — too full with the aisles and exits of the vast embankment dangerously blocked with spectators who could not find a seat. Music thundered from the public address system between overs, sometimes between balls, and each batsman was greeted by his favourite song.

It was gladiatorial fare, the stuff of nightmares for traditionalists. But England, who maintain a more prudish approach than most towards the glam rock side of the game, were for once not inhibited. They played in a manner indicating that they have the measure of this New Zealand side and are anxious to let everybody know it.

In their toothpaste tops of red, white and blue, squad numbers on their backs as well as names, England kept their discipline admirably in the field after losing the toss. They were not panicked when Dominic Cork's third over cost 11, or when 16 were taken from Robert Croft's third, and in answer to the clean striking of Nathan Astle, who reached 50 from only 56 balls, Atherton summoned Tufnell to take the pace off the ball.

To the fourth ball of the twentieth over, Tufnell's first, Astle was caught at extra cover off a leading edge. Adam Parore fell similarly, playing



Tufnell charges down the pitch to celebrate having Fleming stumped by Stewart for 34

too soon as Tufnell deceived with flight. When he later dismissed Chris Cairns and Stephen Fleming to take the heart from the New Zealand batting, Tufnell theatrically waved his cap to each corner of the ground.

Chris Harris nourished the innings with his unbeaten 45 from 51 balls but New Zealand, given hope by the early fall of Atherton and the troubled Nick Knight, quickly knew they had fallen short.

Stewart and Thorpe began to bat with serene command and a drizzly rain made it no easier

for the fielding side to defend against disdainful strokeplay. England required only 25 from ten overs when Thorpe played on and even when Stewart was held at deep square-leg, seven runs later, defeat seemed inconceivable.

There was a whisper of doubt when John Crawley hit across a straight one and a degree of unease when the fretful Cork hit a full toss to mid-wicket. Croft, however, rescued as if unaware that England have a habit of making a nonsense of these games — a habit they are now intent on breaking.

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CHRISTCHURCH SCOREBOARD

New Zealand won toss

NEW ZEALAND

B A Young c Thorpe b Mully 14 (21min, 20 balls, 2 fours)
N J Astle c Thorpe b Tufnell 50 (55min, 82 balls, 6 fours)
A C Parore c and b Tufnell 28 (50min, 51 balls, 1 four)
S P Fleming at Stewart b Tufnell 34 (55min, 55 balls, 1 four)
C J Cairns c Mully b Tufnell 18 (22min, 31 balls, 1 four)
C Z Harris not out 48 (71min, 51 balls, 2 fours)
"H K Knight c and b Tufnell 19 (45min, 29 balls, 1 four)
D N Patel not out 1 (3min, 3 balls)

Extras (b 2, lb 1, w 4, nb 2) 15
Total (50 overs, 207min): 222
G R Larsen, S B Dool and H T Davis did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-24 (Astle 8), 2-47 (Parore 18), 3-100 (Fleming 34), 4-134 (Fleming 34), 5-148 (Harris 2), 6-203 (Harris 34)
BOWLING: Cork 9-0-52-1 (nb 1, w 2, 4 fours, 5-25-0, 4-0-27-1), Mully 5-2-21-1 (3 balls, one spell), Croft 10-1-41-0 (w 1, 4 fours, one spell), Gough 10-0-45-0 (nb 1, 1 four, 4-15-0, 5-30-0), Tufnell 10-1-29-4 (1 four, one spell), Thorpe 6-0-32-0 (w 1, 1 four, one spell).
Score after 15 overs: 75 for 1

ENGLAND

N V Knight c Gorman b Dool 8 (27min, 15 balls)
"M A Atherton b Patel 19 (24min, 21 balls, 3 fours)
"A J Stewart c Astle b Davis 81 (161min, 110 balls, 1 six, 8 fours)

G P Thorpe b Davis 82 (146min, 104 balls, 1 six, 8 fours)

N Hussain not out 11 (33min, 28 balls)

J P Crawley b Dool 0 (5min, 4 balls)

D G Cork c Young b Davis 6 (27min, 9 balls)

R D B Croft not out 8 (2min, 2 balls, 2 fours)

Extras (b 5, w 0) 12

Total (50 overs, 217min): 225

D Gough, A D Mully and P C R Tufnell did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-28 (Knight 8), 2-26 (Stewart 8), 3-198 (Stewart 78), 4-208 (Hussain 4), 5-207 (Hussain 6), 6-218 (Hussain 11)

BOWLING: Dool 10-0-33-2 (w 1, 2 fours, 7-0-25-1, 3-0-8-1), Patel 7-0-49-1 (1 six, 5 fours, 4-0-25-1, 3-0-21-0), Astle 4-0-36-0 (5 balls, 2-0-14-0, 2-0-12-0), Cairns 4-0-25-0 (w 2, 1 six, 2 fours, one spell), Davis 5-5-44-3 (w 2, 5 fours, 2-0-12-0, 2-0-9-0, 4-0-24-3), Larsen 8-0-22-0 (1 four, 6-0-19-0, 2-0-4-0), Harris 7-0-26-0 (w 1, 1 four, 4-0-15-0, 3-0-15-0).
Score after 15 overs: 77 for 2

England won by four wickets

Match award: P C R Tufnell

Umpires: C E King and D M Quested

Third umpire: R S Dune

Referee: P J P Burge (Australia)

International series schedule

Second (Auckland) February 23; Third (Napier) February 26 (booked), Fourth (Auckland) March 1; Fifth (Wellington) March 4

Compiled by Bill Frindall

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 41

OSMUNDA

(b) A fern of the genus so called, especially the royal fern. *Osmunda regalis*. Adopted as a generic name by J. Petiver in *Musei Petiveriani centuria*, 1699. The brooklet was fringed with marsh plants, together with *Osmundas*, Harris-tongues, and other ferns.

PONHAUS

(a) Scramble or a kind of American pudding made from pork and corn meal. From the German *pudding* + *pan* + *haus* a rabbit. "The Pennsylvania Germans called it *Pünkhäus*, which was corrupted into *Ponhaus*, which simply means 'pan rabbit'. This was in line with the use of 'Welsh rabbit'."

RELACHE

(a) A period of rest, an interval. A break from something. From the French word *relâche*. "Caldwell's is one of the few public dancing rooms in London, which is frequented by respectable women. When we arrived, the *relâche* was begun."

POIPOI

(c) A Polynesian dish, usually made from fermented breadfruit. The Polynesian word, 1829. "The most general dish in the Southern Islands is what they call *poi-poi*, nearly resembling the *po* of the Sandwich Islands. It is made with the ripe mountain plantain, either raw or baked, beaten up into a paste or jelly, and diluted with coconut milk. Another kind of *poi-poi* is made with breadfruit, or *opi*, beaten up and diluted with coconut or plain water."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1. Rxf7? Kxf7; 2. Qc2-Kg6; 2... Kg7 or 2... Ke7 are met by 3. Qf6 mate; 3. Qf6-Kd5; 4. Bc2-Kg4; 5. Bg4-Kg4; 6. Kd5 and mate next move.

HOCKEY

Confident Slough put Europe top of agenda

AFTER more than two months of relative inactivity, the women's national league resumes tomorrow with an almost full league programme (Alix Ramsay writes). The only absentee will be Slough, who have more pressing business in France at the European indoor clubs' championship.

Despite their position at the top of the national league, all thoughts of outdoor hockey have been put to one side for the past few weeks as Slough try one more time for the indoor gold medal. They face a daunting task as Germany, so long the strongest force in the indoor game, is represented by two clubs. It results go according to the form books.

Slough would have to beat both back to back to win the tournament. As ever, Slough's confidence is high. "Everyone knows what we're like," Karen Brown, the captain, said. "We're only interested in the gold medal — we've come second too often."

Today Slough play Doncaster, from Russia. And their first real test will be tomorrow against Berliner, the German champions. Russell, however, the European titleholder, lie in wait on Sunday should Slough progress.

In Slough's absence, Ipswich, second in the national league on goal difference, will play Hightown at Tudinchism Road tomorrow.

	Depth (cm)		Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Spm)	Last snow
	L	U	Piste	Off-piste	°C	
AUSTRIA						
Kitzbühel	25	90	good	varied	fair cloud	2 19/2
	(Good piste skiing; whole area has decent snow cover)					
Obergurgl	40	160	good	powder	good sun	0 20/2
	(Wonderful skiing conditions in bright sunshine)					
Schladming	30	50	good	varied	good cloud	5 20/1
	(Generally good; heavy conditions low down)					
Söld	30	75	good	heavy	good cloud	0 19/2
	(Very good skiing throughout resort)					
FRANCE						
Maribel	50	185	good	varied	good sun	4 18/2
	(Windy with fresh snow; off-piste mostly slicked out)					
Tignes	160	225	good	varied	good fair	-2 18/2
	(Excellent skiing throughout Espace Killy)					
ITALY						
Livigno	105	200	good	powder	good snow	-1 20/2
	(Windy with fresh snow; off-piste mostly slicked out)					
Gaio	65	65	good	varied	good fair	-5 20/2
	(Good skiing on all pistes)					
SWITZERLAND						
C Montana	55	300	good	powder	good fair	3 18/2
	(Good skiing on all pistes, particularly glaciers)					
Saas Fee	95	345	good	powder	good fine	1 18/2
	(Excellent skiing on well-prepared pistes)					
Villars	20	100	good	heavy	warm fine	5 18/2
	(Good piste skiing; north-facing runs best)					
Zermatt	45	225	good	varied	good fair	-2 19/2
	(Good skiing on uncrowded pistes; mainly sunny)					

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain.

L - lower slopes; U - upper.

Life begins after M.S.

Message to Myself, Radio 4 FM, 10.00am.

Here is another new series that will raise the blood pressure of listeners who cannot get FM reception. The programmes take the form of audio diaries or, rather, the diaries of ordinary people from Great Britain, Canada and the United States recalled through interviews. The first subject is Eva Marsh, who had multiple sclerosis diagnosed in 1967, when she was 22. The illness, though, was the start of a life rather than the beginning of the end of a life. Eva discovered that her husband did not welcome the prospect of looking after her, so she left her marriage, taking her two children, overcame her symptoms and soared to new heights of fulfilment.

Law In Action, Radio 4, 8.50pm.

The "have a go" approach to criminality in recent years has brought brief fame and tabloid approval to many of the people who fought back, but that has not always protected them from the courts and even imprisonment. *Law In Action* takes a sober approach to the phenomenon, as might be expected, and avoids the temptation to advocate legal protection for those whose defence of themselves sometimes leads to excessive consequences. The courts face an awful dilemma and framing laws to protect citizens who respond to crime by getting involved, rather than turning their backs, is difficult enough to thwart a Solomon. Zacher Masani reports on the issues and hears from both sides of the argument.

Peter Bernard

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiley 2.00pm Nick Campbell 4.00 Kevin Greening 6.15 Newsday 7.00 Pete Tong 8.00am Selection 10.00 One in the Jungle 12.00 Radio 1 Rap Show with Tim Westwood 3.00pm Charlie Jordan

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up To Wogan 9.30 Ian Bruce 11.30 Anne Robinson 1.30pm Double Threat 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Spelling Volumes, with Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Friday Night in Music Night. Live from the White Rock Theatre, featuring Robin Boyle introduces the BBC Concert Orchestra under Robin Stapleton 9.30 Listen to the Stars 10.00 Sheridan Morley 12.00am Jan Briggs

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 9.00 The News 12.00 Midday with Mel 2.00pm Race on Five 4.00 Nationwide 7.00 News Extra 7.30 Parkinson on Sport 8.30 Friday Sport, with Robin Bailey. Tennis: news from the European Community Open in Antwerp; Cricket: a look ahead to the second one day international between New Zealand and England; Football: Cambridge v Carlisle in Division Three 10.00 Paper Talk, with Brian Alexander and Dennis Sewell 11.00 Newsday 12.00am Michael Alphy 12.00am After Hours 3.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy West 7.00 Paul Ross 8.00 Scott Chipman 12.00 Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Drivetime, with Peter Dinkley 7.00 Max Dean's Sportszone 10.00 Mike Allen 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air: Haydn (Symphony No 8 in G); Stanford (The Sorcerer's Apprentice); Elgar (Piano Trio); 9.00 Morning Collection. Elgar (Schnee Böhmischer); Corelli (Sonatas in C sharp minor, Op postic; in C minor); 10.00 Musical Encounters. Includes Scarlatti (Sonata in C); Caplet (Comte Fantastique); John Weldon (Johann Day); Rawsthorne (Violin Concerto No 2); 12.00 Composer of the Week: Pfitzner 1.00pm News; Chamber Music from Manchester, Rodney Studdart introduces a selection by Stephen Vanzo, baritone, and Peter Seymour, trombone 2.00 Divergence. Mozart's Divertimento in B flat performed by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields under Neville Martin 2.15 Music Roundup (1) 3.00 Listening to the Archive. Jascha Horenstein (1/2) 5.00 Music Machine

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping (LW) 6.00 News 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today, includes Thought for the Day 8.40 Yesterday in Parliament 9.00 News 9.05 Desert Island Discs: Mary Brown (1) 9.45 Feedback 10.00 Messages to Myself (FM). See Choice 10.00 An Act of Worship (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW) 10.30 Word of the Hour 11.30 The Natural History Programme 12.00 News; You and Yours 12.25pm Food Programme 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One 1.40 The Archers (1) 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 Classic Serial: The Chieftain, by A.J. Cronin (3/4) (1) 3.00 News; The Afternoon Shift 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. Tim Markov visits a new exhibition, Modern Art in Britain 1910-1914 4.45 Short Story: The Reach of Love, by Mike McCormack

RADIO 5

5.00 PM 5.50 Shipping Forecast 5.55 Weather 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Going Places. David Stafford reveals more ideas for things to do this weekend 7.00 News 7.05 The Archers 7.20 Pick of the Week 8.05 Any Questions? With Clive Aslett and MPs Norman Foster, Neilarm Bruce and Estelle Morris 8.50 Law in Action. See Choice 9.15 News 9.20 News 9.30 Kaleidoscope Feature. Richard Coles talks to novelist Isabel Allende and Jayne Arnes Phillips (1) 9.55 Weather 10.00 The World Tonight 10.45 Book at Bedtime: House of Solitude by Isolation (10/1) 11.00 Week Ending 11.25 Tea Junction. Patrick Harman and his guests take a topical look at the week's events 12.00 News 12.30 The Late Book: Regeneration (10/1) 12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00 AM World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.5-99.5. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.8. LW 198. MW 720. RADIO 5. LIVE. MW 883, 908. WORLD SERVICE. MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 105.8. MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McManus.

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Spain	10p	Sweden	10p
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